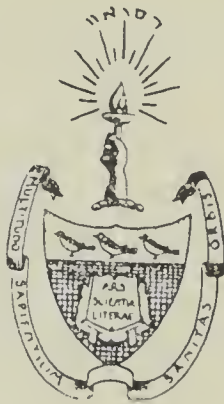


Thirteen Years After

By Will R. Bird

*The Story of the
Old Front Revisited*

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Thirteen Years After

By
WILL R. BIRD

The Story of the Old Front Revisited

Reprinted from Maclean's Magazine
with additions



THE MACLEAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED
TORONTO, CANADA
1932

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CORPORAL WILL R. BIRD, M.M.
42nd Battalion (5th Royal Highlanders)

Will R. Bird, who, in the Fall of 1931, was sent to France and Belgium by Maclean's Magazine in order to write the story of the Front Revisited, knew the ground he was to again travel. He served in France and Belgium from December, 1916, to February, 1919. For eight months he was with the 42nd Battalion, 5th Royal Highlanders in the Vimy sector. Later he was at Hill 70, Passchendaele, Amiens, Arras, Cambrai and Mons. He was a corporal, specialized in scouting, and was awarded the Military Medal at Mons.

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Thirteen Years After



British Memorial, Menin Gate, Ypres.



Sketch map showing location of principal cities and towns in area over which Canadian troops fought in France and Belgium.

Thirteen Years After

CHAPTER I

Y P R E S

YPRES! Stricken Ypres! A ghoulisn welter of ruins, a tragedy with the remnants of the Cloth Hall as its centre. Ypres and the Menin Gate, and the moat, and the ramparts — shell-pounded, sheltering hundreds of soldiers in dug-outs and tunnels. Ypres—a fantastic destruction that will live forever in the minds of those who hurried through it or paused there, seeking refuge, while shells screamed among the shattered walls and sent fresh columns of smoke and dust into the murky atmosphere. Ypres—blasted, ruined, crushed, pitifully broken . . .

And now!

Ypres, a busy, bustling, prosperous Flemish town, with the Menin Gate one of the most magnificent memorials I have seen. Ypres, with paved streets and busy people, children flocking to school, cars and bicycles, heavy carts and buses making almost city traffic. Ypres, a town of fine buildings, handsome and substantial; stores with fine plate-glass windows; hotels and restaurants; homes with light-brown stone fronts finished artistically in the Flemish type of architecture.

The beautiful Cathedral of St. Marin, just finished, has now a magnificent spire, is far more imposing than the original building. The Hospice of Notre Dame has been replaced by the city hall, and the new hospital is away from the Grand Place, in a quiet site far to the right of the town.

Only the Cloth Hall hints of war, and it is being slowly rebuilt. I saw it partly covered by scaffolding, and surrounded by piled brick and stone and busy

masons. Gas pumps and garages, brilliant electric signs, studios and offices—Ypres is a better town than it was before the war.

I came to the Memorial Church of St. George—a splendid building, with a dignity and spiritual beauty in the design that is very impressive. Inside there is a memorial to Field Marshal French, first Earl of Ypres, and all around are tablets by different battalions and divisions. The only Canadian one I could find was inscribed:

“To the glory of God and in memory of the 64 officers and 1,335 N. C. O.’s and men of the 7th Battalion C. E. F. (1st British Columbia Rgt.) who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918.”

Alongside is the Eton Memorial School, its students the children of the employees of the Imperial War Graves Commission and of other English workmen, for there are 600 Britishers in Ypres.

GOING back to the Menin Gate, I began a thorough inspection of Ypres. The Gate itself is wonderful, and the 55,000 names on the panels seem to be whispering to you. There are 7,024 Canadian names, all in order of battalions. I noticed one strange thing. No New Zealand or Royal Flying Corps names are there, and I was told that New Zealand and the R. F. C. would not permit it.

I went back at eight o’clock that night to hear Last Post at the Menin Gate. It

was cold and dark and chilly, and yet there were many present, many who go faithfully summer and winter. The police stand in the street, facing the Gate, at the salute, while the bugles, silver ones, ring out with a sweetness more poignant than words can describe. Many, many times have I heard Last Post, but never as you hear it at the Last Post of the Menin Gate. It is perfect. It is lovely, exquisite, yet indescribably tragic—the death of another day, a music that seems to finger the very chords of your heart, stilling all else.

All veterans go to the Gate in the evening, and one meets men from all corners.

Starting from the left that day, I had walked along the ramparts until I came to the two old ice stores. One was in ruins, but the other is still intact. There were swans in the moat as in war days, but not the same ones. The original pair vanished in May, 1918, and no one knows what became of them.

The Ramparts Cemetery is well kept.

The Lille Gate is entirely restored. All the sandbagged entrances to the underground places have gone and the openings are bricked up. Going along the Rue de Lille, I came to a house with a small tablet on the wall:

“Little Talbot House—a daughter house of Toc H in Poperinghe. Opened November 13, 1917, to April 14, 1918.”

They told me that it was the only house front not destroyed. On a large stone beside the door frame a name is chiselled crudely:

“H. M. McWhe. May 31, 1916, 1st Pioneer Battalion, Canada.”

I found only two Nissen huts. One is near the ramparts close to the Lille Gate, and the other is over near the prison, a home for a gardener. The last thirty feet of the old prison remains, but all the front has been rebuilt, and the ruin is walled so that one cannot get in.

The Reservoir Cemetery, back of the prison, is wonderfully kept. It is all perfectly arranged and the flowers were beyond description.

In the early days, many Canadians were billeted in a convent formerly occupied by Irish nuns. Among the veterans

I have heard it called “The Bug House,” and I went to see what had become of it. It is there, just as the war left it, except that the entrance is walled up and alongside there is a barrier to prevent any one entering the ruin. “Louse House” is crudely inscribed on one wall by some soldier painter, and, in green, at the old doorway, “Bug House.” A thousand names are on the wall of the ruin, but there is seldom anything to tell that they are Canadian ones. I found one:

“16573 Lce/Cpl F. D. Grimsell.”

And, on the remnants of plaster that have escaped the rains, one can see many grim things written about the Kaiser, not always in the best taste. For instance:

“I hope the Kaiser has fleas.”

Going left from the Menin Gate, I found several openings into the old Belgian wine cellars in the ramparts that were used as dug-outs. I got inside two of them. Nails in the wall still held shreds of a khaki overcoat, and in the debris was an old mess-tin cover.

Many will remember the old dressing station at “Dead End,” the end of the Yser Canal. Its concrete is still intact. The Belgians are clearing and cleaning the canal, and it is almost finished as far as where Bridge 4 used to be.

The years have rotted timbers and the old coverings are collapsing. I saw three places on the ramparts where it had caved in. Up at “Whitesheet,” a priest’s house was recently built. One day his housekeeper seemed an unreasonably long time bringing his dinner, so he went to the kitchen. It was a gaping hole. The floor, stove, cook and all had fallen thirty feet into a huge German dug-out.

Everywhere one goes, one hears stories, some tragic, some comic. One of the women who keep shop in Ypres was back of Vimy Ridge during the war. She kept an estaminet somewhere near Villers Au Bois, and she is watching all the time for men from a certain 3rd Division battalion. She asks all Canadians who visit her the number of their unit, and she can speak good English. I asked her why she wanted to know, and she showed me, carefully kept in a small tin box, seven of those cards which were given to the



Mousetrap Farm as it is today. Do you remember it when—?

soldiers along with their first gas masks. They had been given to her as good Canadian money, and she grimly awaits opportunity to get them exchanged again.

NEXT morning I went through the Gate toward the Menin Road, turning aside to see the Town Civilian Cemetery. It is most interesting. Thirteen years after, there are still graves not repaired. The large wooden cross above it survived the war, and in that cross is an eighteen-pound shell, just as it lodged there during the war. The heat of the sun exploded some shells in exposed places, so the Belgians carefully removed the shell and emptied it, then replaced it exactly as it was. Graves of the first British killed in '14 are there, mostly Guardsmen.

The Menin Road is wonderfully paved, smooth as a floor. The White Château, first landmark, has been rebuilt but in different style. The ruins of a factory are on the right side of the road, and four or five British pillboxes remain in the fields, stark reminders of short years ago. The Belgians have set 1932 as the date for demolishing all pillboxes not to be kept as historical points. Hellfire Corner has new buildings on both sides

of the road and has lost every vestige of its war-time aspect. A stone is there, one of a long line stretching across the Salient, telling in Flemish, French and English that it marks the limit of the German invasion. Yet, according to trench maps, the Germans reached the top of the slope overlooking the town.

Down in the hollow, beyond Birr Crossroads Cemetery, the Menin Road has caved in. All traffic detours, and even the tramway has been shifted. A huge opening is there, and scores of men are working to fill it in. The road dropped into a huge tunnel, strongly timbered. It was constructed by the 14th Division in 1915, and an immense amount of timber has been removed. The tunnel runs on past Hooze, and the road has collapsed at the junction with Cambridge Road, where an underground aid post was established. Rotted tunics and kilts and caps and trousers, all kinds of equipment and uniforms, have been brought up from the dark cavities below, and the tunnel stretches away a seemingly endless distance. The chasm is forty feet deep and fifty feet square, and it looks as if a gallery runs from the dug-out to Hooze, but no one seems to know whether or not the Germans were making use of this underground place.



RAIN, rain and mist, and slow ob-
 scuring clouds,
 And mile on mile, and league on league
 of bog,
 A waste where desolation outruns
 sight.
 A shell-torn track—one time the busy
 road—
 Trails straightly on where no man
 passes by,
 Guarded on either side by poor white
 ghosts,
 The gaunt and spectral trees which
 still must stand
 Though dead. A highway of calamity.
 Past grass-grown mounds, not graves
 of men, but graves
 Of towns; all havoc and decay long
 lost
 Beneath the weeds, the oneness of the
 plain.
 Beyond, far down the waste, as in a
 dream
 The phantom city rises through the
 mist.
 Some broken towers, clustered broken
 walls
 Set in a rampart. Like a shattered
 crown
 The ruin lies. Alone in level miles
 That tragic pointing witness holds the
 heart
 Of all the woe the brooding stillness
 hides.
 Of all the terror, misery, disgust,
 Of all the splendor, fortitude, and will
 That met the first great battle—and
 endured.
 Such is the Salient after four years'
 War.

So I saw it in December, 1918.
 And now!

A bright October morning is reflected
 from hundreds of roofs and tall spires
 and towers of Ypres. All around, the
 Salient stretches in an immensity of
 green and red; green fields and gardens
 and hedges and woods, ribboned with
 paved roads. Red brick walls and tiled
 roofs dot the landscape, and there are
 innumerable clusters of farms and vil-
 lages and church spires—always, in all
 directions, the brick and tile of new
 homes.

In the fields are Belgian farmers, with
 their huge carts and huge horses, gath-
 ering roots, beets for sugar and chicory
 for coffee. Stacks of straw are about
 their barns, and there is a pleasant dron-
 ing of threshing machines. Women in
 clogs clatter about the cobbled yards and
 gossip with one another. Great pigs, as
 many as ten or twelve in a yard, wallow
 in the mud.

Children in groups are on their way to
 school, and so used are they to tourists
 that they shout, "Ullo, English," at
 every one who is not a Belgian. Goats
 are tethered beside the gardens. The
 roads teem with traffic. Bicycles swarm
 on the paths reserved for them, women
 riding into Ypres to do their shopping,
 workmen going to their tasks, boys and
 girls intent on errands. Yellow buses
 roar past, and there are countless trucks.

The whole is a picture of very pros-
 perous farm life, of activity and plenty.
 But steady your gaze and you will see,
 thinly hidden, the lasting leer of war.
 It is there in the pillboxes that peep at
 you from all corners, in the countless
 memorials and cemeteries that tell their
 own story.

Leaving Ypres by the road leading to
 St. Julien, one passes an entire block of
 neat, white-painted, red-tiled tenement
 houses—the homes of the town poor.
 Every building is a gift from Canada.
 They were erected after the war and
 are now worth double their original
 value. On the nearest I read the tablet:

"Le Journal La Presse de Mont-
 real. A la mémoire des Canadiens
 morts pour la Liberté du Monde."

Going on along the road, one comes to
 the White House Cemetery, named after
 the White House Dressing Station, the
 only building on the road that with-
 stood the war. St. Jean is rebuilt—trim
 new homes on both sides of the road.
 It was here that all forward dressing sta-
 tions were concentrated during the gas
 attack in '15. Across the fields on the
 left are many farms and a busy brick
 factory. Wieltje Farm Cemetery is just
 a short distance on, but the farm has
 not been re-established. A British pillbox
 is close beside the cemetery wall.

Oxford Road is on the right, and Ox-
 ford Road Cemetery; then a tall shaft



Above: St. Julien as it looked in 1917.

Below: Would you believe it? St. Julien as you'll find it today.

that is the memorial of the 50th Northumbrian Division. Wieltje is a small cluster of houses, but there is no trace of the old British lines of 1915. A road to the north is Admiral's Road, leading to what was known as Mousetrap Farm, on some maps "Shell Farm," on some "Death Farm." Every old "sweat" knows the story of Admiral's Road. The legend runs that there was in Ostend a German admiral who was very anxious to see what the actual front was like. He was given permission to go to the trenches and got into No Man's Land, where he was captured by a British patrol.

Where the old railhead used to be is a crossroads. In the central green stands a post, one arm reading: "Passchendaele 7 kilometers." Standing there I visualized a night in November, '17, when I came down the old plank road. It was weirdly dark and a drizzle of rain was falling. The damp air was acrid with the stench of high explosives, and the plank road had been smashed in a dozen places. A burning lorry gave ghastly light on another that had been shattered by a direct hit. And a steady stream of walking wounded came plodding by in the fitful light of the wreckage; sodden, white-faced, bandaged men, plodding in grotesque hurry, praying only that they might reach an ambulance. All the Salient was winking with red flashes, and the terrible, slamming, thudding "hate" of the night filled every ear. Flares soared and fell in a sickly whiteness.

On rising ground, near a road leading to Kitchener's Wood, there is a demarcation stone, "Here the invader was brought to a standstill." It seems very near to Ypres. Standing there, I counted, in two fields, thirty-nine German pillboxes, some in good condition. A party of men were working there, preparing to demolish them by dynamite.

LOOKING over at Mousetrap Farm, I tried to see it as it was in '15, when it was the headquarters of the Canadian 3rd Brigade during the gas attack. And at Kitchener's Wood, now but two acres of trees, I tried to see again that battle in the night when the 10th and 16th Canadian Scottish charged into the midnight

darkness with the bayonet. Outside the wood there are two German pillboxes that are built over two houses, the brick walls being easily seen in the concrete. Back of them is an immense heap of concrete, fifty yards in length. It was a huge structure, a mighty mass, and contained munitions. The British succeeded in blowing it up, and there the ruin lies, appalling, huge, terrible.

Always there are wandering veterans on those lanes and roads about the Salient, and it seemed that the gods were especially kind to me when a man came to the ruin and began conversation. It developed that he was an original 16th man, and he gave me his story.

"We moved up here the week before the gas came over," he said, "and relieved French soldiers. We stayed four days in the line and worked all the time filling sandbags and rebuilding posts. There was not much shelling. When relieved we marched back across the field to some big barns, and the next day many of us went into Ypres to buy beer and canned stuff. The Belgians were still there in the cellars, though the town had been shelled. The next day, however, orders were posted forbidding any soldier to go there.

"We had just got tea on April 22 when we saw a thick yellow-green cloud, like a fog, drifting over the trenches. In front of it, headed toward us, was a wild rush of people, French Colonials and Belgians who were leaving their homes. They had pushcarts and barrows of all kinds, and many of them quit trying to hustle their big farm horses and left them loose in the fields. Women were jabbering and crying, and children were in every one's way. It was some time before we understood about the gas. The 'fall in' order came at once, and extra ammunition was served out. We marched off in the dark. The smell of gas was all about us, a thick heaviness that affected our eyes and throats. We lined up in a field and expected to go into a trench. It was beastly cold and we had not been allowed our greatcoats.

"It was nearly midnight before we were lined up and our officers told us that we were for an attack. Four guns had been left in the wood and we were to

charge it. They spoke as if it was to be a sort of sacrifice attack, and told us to shout and yell like thousands of men as soon as we were at the Germans. We had no bombs or machine gun and there was no barrage. We simply walked over two fields, and there were hedges in front of us. The wood was a dark blur in front. No shells came near us, and we were pressing on, shaking with cold and expectancy, when there was a rifle shot, then hundreds of them. Bullets seemed to come like a hail. We all began yelling and rushed into the wood. It did not seem to take two minutes, yet men went down in heaps. My only thought was to get into the wood among the trees. The uproar was terrible; we all yelled our best. Strangely, the Germans did not put up much fight. After the first clash they began to beat it, and over half those killed were bayoneted from behind as they were running with our lads after them. A German officer surrendered, and he said that we had beaten the 2nd Prussian Guards and that there had been nearly 7,000 men to defend the wood. We pushed on into the field on the other side and began to dig in. Luckily, there was little shelling, but we only had our entrenching tools. However, it was misty at dawn and we were able to get down out of sight. The Germans shot at us all day, and no one could get near us with rations. At night they got to us with three biscuits, a piece of meat and an issue of rum per man. The next day we were relieved by means of going double along a ditch for over a mile. I could see our dead piled between the last hedge and the wood."

GOING back to the road, I came next to Seaforth Cemetery, Cheddar Villa. There is an immense German gun emplacement beside the cemetery that concealed guns which were used to bombard Ypres. Then one meets a second line of German pillboxes, so closely built that they seem in places to be a solid row. Twenty-two of them stretch north in one field.

St. Julien is rebuilt as it was before destruction, and many of the former residents have returned. A road leads left at the entrance to the village, and while I was there looking around, a car came

and halted. In it was a 13th Battalion veteran who was visiting the Salient. He asked many questions about my work, then differed with me on one point. He said 3rd Brigade headquarters were not over on Admiral's Road at Mousetrap Farm, but there at the junction where I stood, the main building being on the St. Julien Road. I had with me a picture of the headquarters, and his description tallied exactly. On the left, in St. Julien, there is an enormous German brigade headquarters in concrete that will surely last the century. Three other pillboxes are there and, looking between them, one sees the red roofs and church steeple of Langemarck.

Over on the left, to the rear, is Kitchen-er's Wood. On the right is a windmill, built, so the Belgians say, in the position of the original one, and just in front of it are two more pillboxes, very strong ones. At the village crossroads a new building has replaced the one used by the 13th Battalion as their advanced headquarters during the Second Battle of Ypres.

The spot they call "Vancouver" is, to me, the most impressive place in the Salient. No words will ever describe the brooding figure that keeps watch there above those 2,000 who died to make Canada a name as respected as any in history. It is wonderful, gripping, forceful. One stands a long time there, no matter what his race or creed, and they told me that when there is a land mist many persons will come in the early morning to look at the memorial. The mist hides all the foundation and, rising from the fog, is the soldier, leaning on his rifle, pondering, waiting, brooding. The effect fills the watcher with awe.

KEERSELAERE! Standing there near St. Julien, I tried to see things as they were that terrible time in '15. It was the very spot where Colonel Hart McHarg of the 7th Battalion, Major Od-lum and Lieutenant Mathewson went forward to reconnoitre—and saw Germans lining a hedge 100 yards away. The colonel was shot as they raced back, and was brought in by Captain George Gibson and Sergeant J. Dryden, but he died at Poperinghe. Over on the right, Gravenstafel Ridge rises plainly, and the Can-

adian position began near there and ran in a sharp triangle to beyond the right of Keerselaere. The 5th Battalion was on the right, then the 8th, 15th and 13th formed another side of the triangle. The 13th held the point of it, and running along the left side of the triangle were the 14th, 7th, 10th, and 16th Battalions, with the 2nd Battalion supporting them.

Such was the position on April 23. The 1st and 4th Battalions attacked in broad daylight, facing direct frontal fire, and took the German trench with the bayonet, a stupendous thing. Every battalion did the impossible. They held those flimsy, shell-smashed lines against all artillery fire, machine-gun fire, and massed German advances. They evacuated positions that became sure death, and fought again in new lines with the same tenacity.

The story of Corporal Fred Fisher, of the 13th Battalion is almost household history, as his was the first V.C. won by the Canadians. He and four men set up a machine gun in an exposed position and thus covered the retreat of Major King's battery—guns which had stayed in position and kept firing until the enemy was but 200 yards away. All of Fisher's crew were killed, but he had fresh helpers from the 14th Battalion, and he and his machine gun remained unhit. After the big guns had gone he took another position and mowed down the enemy from his new advantage. All his men were hit, but he kept on alone until he was killed.

Sergeant McLeod took his place, and was killed. Then Lieutenant Ross, the machine-gun officer, located a fresh position and there Lance-Corporal Parkes and Private Glad set up another gun and opened fire, and held to the post all that day. At daybreak on Sunday two companies of the 8th Battalion were relieved by the Durhams, and retired to reserve trenches. But at five p.m. they were called back to a position on the extreme left, which one company held. The Germans got behind them and they were ordered to retire. Two platoons retired, and two acted as cover for them. Sergeant Knobel led the platoons back, and all the officers of the company stayed with the covering party, of which not one member survived, all being killed or

taken prisoner. On a high bank now crested with beet tops Sergeant-Major Hall, of the 8th Battalion, tried to rescue a wounded comrade in daylight. He was killed, and the wounded man was also shot through the head. The high bank is easily traced.

GOING back, I stopped to take a picture of Mousetrap Farm. It is rebuilt but some of the old moat remains, and it was across that very channel that Major Hughes and Lieutenant Thomson, of the 14th Battalion, swam to rescue wounded when incendiary shells had set the farmhouse ablaze. Captain Scrimger carried a wounded man to the open and protected him with his own body from the flying shrapnel, thereby winning the Victoria Cross.

The 13th man stayed all day about the sector.

"However did you hold on?" I asked him. "What was it like?"

"I don't know how we did it," he said, "but everybody seemed determined to hold the Germans, and nothing else mattered. The endurance of the men was almost unbelievable. They could not be cowed."

Could not be cowed! Gassed, shelled, surrounded, raked by machine-gun fire, without food or reinforcements, they stemmed the grey horde. "I don't know how we did it!"

Nor does any one. Enough that they did it. And the 16th man had spoken lightly of that awful night in Kitchener's Wood. That attack, with cold steel and without bombs or barrage, was too amazing for many to comprehend even unto this day, but Marshal Foch said in the London Evening Times:

"I think the finest act in the war was the counter-attack of the 10th and 16th battalions of Canadians after their division had been frightfully punished by gas. This counter-attack so amazed the enemy, who counted on their gas demoralizing or killing the Canadians, that they slowed down their advance to the coast and Calais was saved."

It is hard to visualize that April fighting. There were few trenches, but the ground was vastly shell-torn. All the wreckage was new then, all the more

shocking because the war was new. And those men were newcomers. Not so long before they had come from England and had marched merrily up the paved roads, singing with great gusto: "The roses 'round the door make me love mother more," or "It's a long way to Tipperary, it's a long way to go."

Now — cemeteries and pillboxes and the dusk coming down, as an old lady stops at one of the memorials. She is wearing two medals on her coat and is very frail. We leave her there with her thoughts. The gardener will see that she gets back to Ypres.

They are wonderful men, those gardeners, always eager to help in any way, and they meet with many strange experiences. One told me that not long ago a wistful looking little woman came and asked him to help her find her husband's grave. It was one of those that are along the cemetery walls bearing an inscription, "Believed to have been buried in this cemetery." The gardener explained this to the woman, then prepared to retire.

"Don't go," she said. "I won't be long."

She clasped her hands then and spoke aloud.

"I've come, dear," she said. "It's been a long time, I know, but there were so many long times that you didn't come to see me. And you deceived me so many times. I never could be sure of you and" — her voice became very pathetic as she looked at the inscription — "I'm not sure of you even now."

On back to Ypres. The sun has gone,

and in the gloom the lights that wink about the Salient might a'most be shell-fire. There is ever so slight an inclination to hurry, and lines from the old Wipers Times return vividly:

A six-inch tolls the knell of parting
day,
The transport car winds slowly o'er
the lea.
A sapper homeward plods his weary
way
And leaves the world to wipers and
to me.

Now fades the glimmering starshell
from the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness
holds:
Save where a whizzbang howls its
rapid flight
And "five rounds rapid" fill the distant
folds.

Beneath the Ramparts old and grim
and grey,
In earthy sap and casement cool and
deep;
Each in his canvas cubicle and bay,
The men condemned to Wipers soundly
sleep.

Full many a man will venture out by
day,
Deceived by what he thinks a quiet
spell;
Till to a crump he nearly falls a prey,
And in the neighboring cellar bolts
like hell.

CHAPTER II

PASSCHENDAELE

“When this bloomin’ war is over,
Oh, how happy I will be.
When I get my civvy clothes on,
No more soldierin’ for me.”

ONE lone voice piped this ditty, and the rest of us listened glumly. It was late October, wet, and chilling to the bone. We had come to Ypres and were in the shell-wrecked Asylum, waiting for darkness before moving out into the foul flats of the Salient.

“What are we in—a convent or what?” The singer stared at the broken walls.

“The Asylum,” somebody answered him.

“By glory! This is the first time this battalion ever got where it belonged,” came the rejoinder.

We went out at dusk through a reeking swamp to California Trench. A steady mist was falling and the air was heavy with a sour smell of disinfectants, stale gas, sodden clothing, and a faint, sickly odor of decay—the breath of the Salient. There was no more singing and very little conversation. Something sinister seemed to be hovering over us, clutching at us with fearful talons; the spell was on us.

California Trench was a filthy ditch. We sat with our backs against its slimy sides, braced there, a series of ground sheets, corrugated iron, odd canvas, fastened above us as a roof, and there endured the night. In the morning we waded in the soft mud to our knees, in a bone-chilling rain, to the assistance of a battery. No horses could be got near the guns so we tied long ropes to them and, with twenty or thirty men on each, pulled the guns through the mud to new positions, often turning them over and over in the soupy mire, as the wheels were of little service when there was nothing solid beneath. And over came

a flight of huge black Gothas, dropping bombs. No airmen of ours were in sight and they worked with maddening deliberateness.

On and up, via Track Four, to Abraham Heights. Bogged tanks that rocked and squelched in the mire when you entered them. A hell of shellfire in the mad, rain-swept dark, every man intent only in getting away on that single narrow track.

On up Gravenstafel. Digging in on the slope of that putrid valley of Ravebeek. A nerve-wracking crawling in the dark, a patrol in the direction of Furst Farm. Then the attack on Graf House. Midnight, November 2, without a barrage. The Germans were waiting for us, and it was a nightmare never to be forgotten. Not enough survivors got through to hold the place more than a few hours. Then, the long agony of return to Ypres.

In bright October sunshine I went to ground near Mousetrap Farm and tried to picture the location of California Trench, but it was all well-tilled fields and seemingly had never been anything else. At Wieltje I took the old plank road to Passchendaele, past Bridge House to Spree Farm. There I stopped and looked around. It is a land of pillboxes. There were thirty-eight in the vicinity of Fortuin on my left, and three long concrete fortresses near Pond Farm. The man at Spree Farm said he was a son of the former owner, and had come back to live in the same spot where he was born. Over on the right was where the old Walks, four and five, used to run, and Pommern Castle was now a large, new farm.

The scenery from Spree Farm to Passchendaele is the finest in the Salient. It is not so thickly settled as over in the St. Julien-Langemarck area, but the



*In circle: Hill
60 as it looks
t o d a y. At
right: Hill 60
during the
war.*

farms are more orderly; there are more trees set out, more trim hedges. In the Fortuin district, pillboxes are used as tool sheds and chicken pens. Elephant iron forms roofs for sheds, and corrugated iron serves as fences. Barbed wire is strung from the old wire stakes—screw ones—we used. At one spot I could count fifty-eight pillboxes, and, viewing them, one cannot understand how the enemy was ever routed from his holdings. Many of these pillboxes have water in them, but there are dry-floored ones. I went to them, searching. Old pouches, bits of German equipment, waterbottles, rusted entrenching tools, a rotting gas mask—there is much to be found yet, if one cares to probe.

The old plank road has vanished and in its place is one of rough cobbles. Every farm along the way has its stack of planks in the yard. Every house along the way is old in design but brand new; every village, every home and church is an exact replica of the original, and, where this can possibly be done, is built on the old foundations.

On the left, at Bridge House Farm, there is a section of ground that has not been tilled. It is a chaos of shell craters, grass-grown, and the bed of the light railway lines can easily be traced. Gallipoli is a smaller farm than the others, and the farmer was cordial.

Most of the men one meets in the Salient seem averse to conversation, are not friendly. They hate all things connected with the war. One spoke bitterly in his rough-throated fashion, as he told me how his son had been killed in '21 through the explosion of a shell. "These English made poor shells," he finished angrily. "They should have exploded at the time." I pointed out that it was quite possible his son had uncovered a German shell, but he would not have that side of it. No, he was sure it was the English who caused all the deaths.

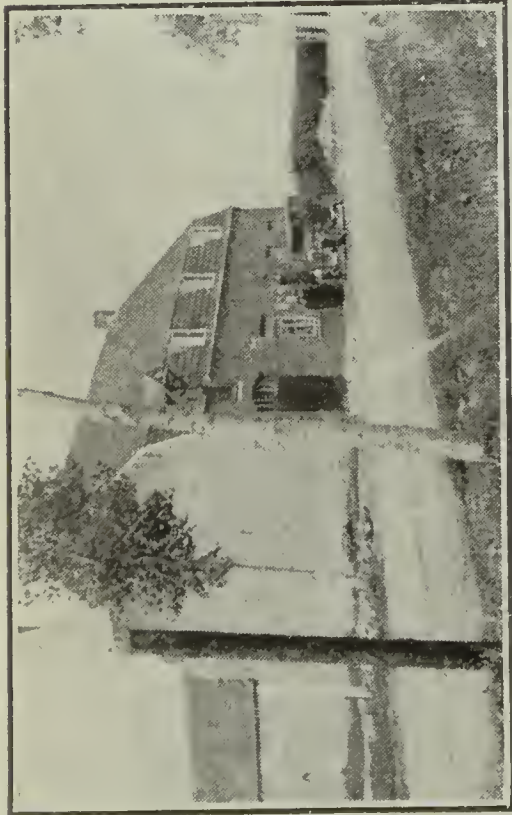
The grade gets stiffer as one approaches Gravenstafel. On the left is a small British pillbox, and the crest of the ridge is crowned by a New Zealand Memorial which is very prettily surrounded by trees. A road runs along the ridge and, away from the trees and buildings on the corner, one has a wonderful view

over the land leading to Bellevue Spur and Passchendaele. Abraham Heights seem mostly acres of turnips and beets and cabbage, white grain stubble, green fields, brown patches of plowed land, yellow straw stacks, red roofs, and grey cobbled roads. Black and white cattle are grazing in one corner. Passchendaele looks a very large village in the distance. Trees line the road toward Tyne Cot and three black German crosses are silhouetted.

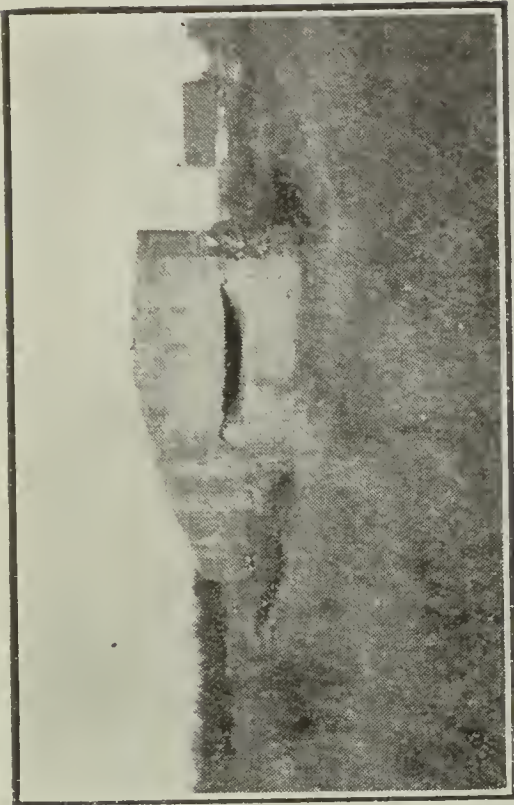
On the left of the plank road as you go on to Bellevue, Waterloo Farm is the only break in great fields that have been newly harrowed, a great expanse of loose brown earth. Two red roofs ahead of a small wood I mark as Wolf Copse, and then there are more brown fields leading to a big farm on Goudberg Spur. Goudberg means "gold hill," but it meant much more to those who fought up its incline in '17. Wallemolen is a collection of five roofs, and Woodland is a wood of half-grown trees. It was in that area that the Fourth C. M. R.'s struggled through swamps and water in the late days of October.

The long bare slope of Bellevue today leads to a very prosperous farm, with large, well-planned buildings which house flocks of white Wyandottes. It would seem strange to that company of the 43rd which fought its way up the Spur and held on for four hours in the face of furious fire from pillboxes. And on this spot, Lieutenant C. P. J. O'Kelly, sent with a company of the 52nd to relieve the pressure, won his V.C. His company, joined by another from the 52nd, captured nine officers, 275 men and twenty-one machine guns.

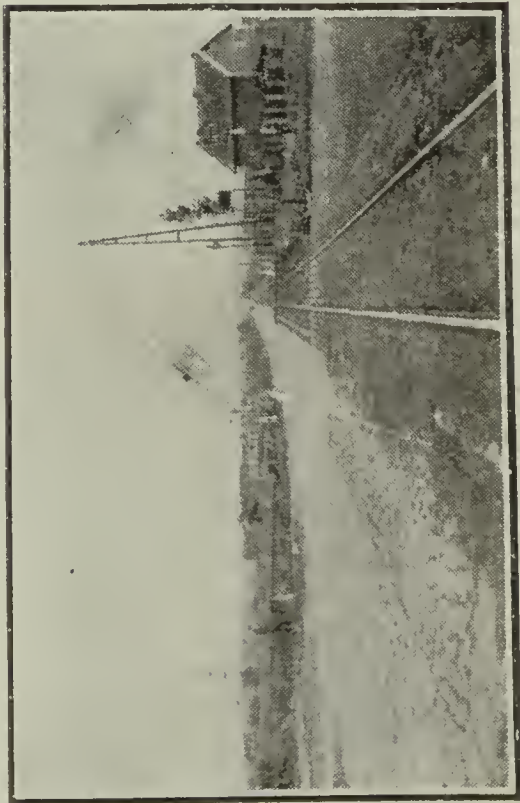
STANDING at Bellevue Spur one gets a wonderful view of the Salient. It is a great saucer of green dotted with red and banded with grey roads. Stand there and you will realize the immense superiority of the German positions, and the complete observation the enemy had of every move that we made. No person could move above ground without being seen, and where the high netting and camouflage were strung, a puff of dust was enough to betray traffic. German observers could sit snugly on those



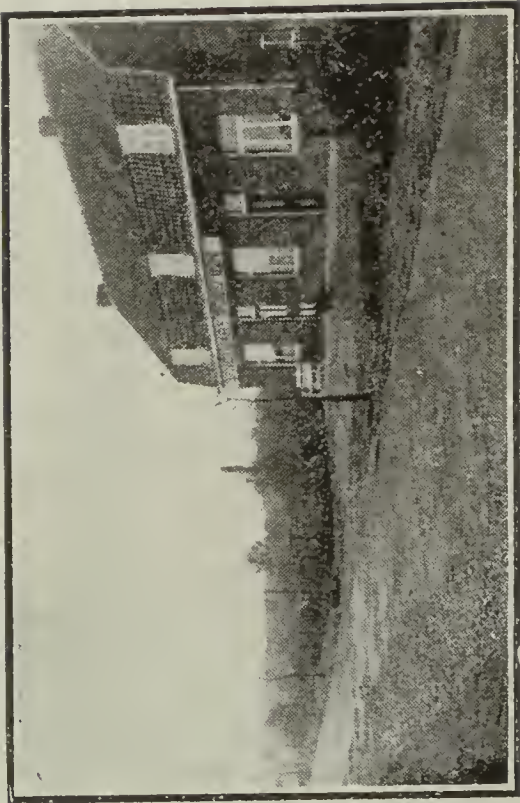
*The old headquarters of the 13th Battalion,
R. H. C., has not changed greatly.*



*British machine-gun post at Hill 60,
built on a German pill-box.*



*Hellfire Corner is now serene
and peaceful.*



*Today: The Inn at Sanctuary
Wood.*

ridges, marking their maps, talking to gunners over the telephone wires, and register on every crossroad, battery, duckboard track, or new working; could define every foot of parapet and take its measure accurately. That men survived in those places will always seem an incredible thing to the veteran from other fronts, and that the enemy, with such advantage, could not conquer, proves that those who held Ypres had something even stronger than the science of war, something beyond the measure of the enemy's calculations.

Passchendaele looks a fine town as you near it, and is a well-built village, though not so impressive when you are there. Its position makes it seem larger than it is. We saw but one man as we entered the usual Grande Place, a bowed old man whose clogs clattered on the stones. The Passchendaele church is restored exactly as it was, and in it is a very fine memorial window, with the British arms on the left and the Belgian on the right. The figure of Saint George is in the centre and the whole is a memorial to the 66th Division, and all the coats-of-arms are from Lancashire.

At Crest Farm there is the Canadian Memorial, splendidly situated, with maples from Canada planted about it.

The Second Division captured the town, the 31st, 27th and 26th battalions attacking, and the 27th cleaned many machine-gun nests with the bayonet, Private P. J. Robertson winning the V.C. by outstanding work.

"Who would true valor see, let him come hither."

That inscription should be placed somewhere at Passchendaele.

Farther along the road, on the left in a field, another Memorial gleams white in a setting of green. A white-painted fence is around it and it has a perfect setting on the crown of the slope. This is the memorial of the 85th Nova Scotia Highlanders. On again, and there are two large German cemeteries, their black crosses seeming a forest of black arms, so thickly are they placed. Three large ones tower over the field.

Turn right and you are at the Tyne Cot Cemetery. Leaving the cemetery, the road leads on through Zonnebeke

(Sunny Brook), a fine village with a very large and modern school. Children swarm the streets, laughing and playing, and the Zonnebeke folk seem all a cheerful, smiling lot.

I stopped at a farm to chat with the walrus-mustached individual who was spreading lime, a task very much in evidence all over the Salient.

"How goes the farming?" I asked.

"Not good with such a wet August," he said. "We had forty-eight days of rain this summer. But," he went on, "my land is richer than before. It is the best land I have ever seen. My crops are good if it was dry; they are the biggest yet."

All over those miles you hear the same story; all that blood-soaked region seems doubly productive now.

For seven or eight years these farmers have been working their farms, seeing all summer long tourists who come to view the places where they were in war time, or where their menfolk fell, yet they do not seem to grasp the situation. I was taking a picture of pillboxes on the St. Julien Road, being close to a farm. The farmer appeared and jabbered excitedly. I could not understand him, and his son came. "Wait," he said, "there are three more pigs behind, and my father wants them in the picture as well."

Six fat hogs were grubbing about the ground beside the pillboxes and the farmer was sure I was intent on getting a photograph of them.

There were many explosions over on the St. Julien area as I neared Ypres—the dynamiting of pillboxes, and one needed little fancy to think that a Strafe was on. The workers are quite keen in their preparations, as in the digging about the pillboxes they very often find a variety of souvenirs, for which there is a ready sale. German rifles, strangely, fetch a good price if the parts are not entirely beyond use. They are purchased by buyers who do not want them as war relics, but for use. Thirteen years after, and every week some one finds something of interest. A short time ago workers near Ypres made a glorious find. In excavating for drainage they uncovered an old dug-out that had been crushed in. Inside were eight—get that number—

eight jars of S. R. D., and I mean that. Every jug was full, had never been tapped. It's a mystery, such an amount at one place, but it was there, and part of Ypres had a holiday without the usual proclamations.

OF ALL the death-traps of the Salient, what place held more fear than the Menin Road, the "red road" to Hooze? I saw it last in '18, a slimy, foul way in a December mist. The camouflage netting that hung along the stretch below Hellfire Corner was torn and hanging from the posts, and up beyond Hooze the only landmarks were derelict tanks, fourteen of them in less than a mile of frontage, stranded there, rusted targets for German gunners.

Now all is changed. Hellfire Corner is a cheerful spot with a pleasant café close by; the road itself is smooth and hard, and the traffic does not wait for nightfall. Just at Birr Crossroads the workmen are still busy filling the cavities caused by the drop into the old tunnels. Going around the detour and up the road a few hundred yards, I branched off toward Railway Wood and Bellewarde Lake. The change is incredible. Down at the lake the undergrowth is so rank that it is difficult to get through, and there are no signs of war. It is an isolated, lonely spot, and one dead stub stands like a reminder of the past. In that vicinity the Princess Pats in May, '15, endured a terrible bombardment. Three times the Germans came in attack and three times they were driven back, and when relieved, but two officers and 150 men of the Pats answered the roll-call.

Railway Wood is a fearsome tangle. The wet season caused a tremendous growth of weeds and bushes, and the entire area is so cratered that one chances breaking a leg if he enters the wood.

Hooze is covered with young trees. The château grounds are now well kept and there is an abundance of flowers along the walks. Baron de Vincke, the owner of Hooze, came back after the war and intended to rebuild, but he is dead. His widow lives in the bungalow that was to serve until the château was restored. Next is a building in which the

caretaker resides, and then comes a modern home, a really fine house in which lives a son of the Baron, who is burgomaster of Zillebeke. He married a wealthy Scottish girl during the war, and her taste for lawns and flowers is much in evidence.

The Hooze crater is entirely surrounded by trees, a dank, water-filled hole that few go near. All the derelict tanks were salvaged by a private company and that district is now under cultivation. As I went on, a large party of men were filling in more cavities that had occurred, and one showed me the number of rifles and bayonets that had been taken out of the old tunnels. Over sixty rifles, British and German, were there, and numberless bayonets. I took three of them, one of which was a German sawtooth weapon. They were selling the rifles at fifteen cents for the Lee-Enfields and twenty-five cents for the German.

Coming back past the Culvert I turned in at Maple Avenue near Outpost Farm. It is a splendid road and lined on both sides by young maple trees. On the right, as you go in, there is a large corner that is a German nursery supervised by a German, though the workers are Belgians. There all shrubs and flowers for the German cemeteries are grown. Zouave Wood has not grown thickly. It is a rather insignificant patch.

One comes to Sanctuary Wood Inn, quite a modern building bearing a huge sign. The grounds are decorated with machine guns, rifles and bomb throwers, and a sign on the fence corner invites all to go inside the barrier and view real "Canadian front line trenches." The proprietor is Mr. Delannoy, a handsome Belgian who acquired this ground after the war and has spent his time in preserving that corner exactly as it was. From the map locations I would say that he has the ground about Crab Crawl, Lovers' Walk and Warrington Avenue.

These trenches are the first real relics of the war. The old duckboards are rotting and crumbling, but the proprietor has placed a brace here and there so as to keep the trench from closing. There are six dugout entrances, but no one is allowed to venture in them. When he



The village of St. Eloi in October, 1931.

took over the ground the trenches were very deep, with a passage under the regular bathmats. This passage has been filled in. All around one sees the litter of war, bits of equipment, old tins, steel helmets, broken rifles, Lewis gun pans, waterbottles, dud shells, old entrenching tools. Out in front a tangle of black wire remains as it was, and in among the gaunt, rotting stubs there is the wreckage of an airplane.

I questioned that so much could have been recovered in that area, and Mr. Delannoy invited me to remain with him while he worked. Every month he finds something fresh to dig, some old sap or post he discovers by patient searching. This time he had found, through one side caving in, corrugated iron sides of some sap. He dug along for fifteen feet and uncovered a small bivvy. I stayed and watched the work, and was convinced. In that space he uncovered a dud "toffee apple," a rotting mass of khaki that was probably an overcoat, a steel helmet, a Mills bomb, and a rifle. The rifle was in bad condition, all the woodwork being rotted, and was a Ross. He gave me the bomb as a souvenir, and I am certain that there is a mine of material to be found there in that Wood.

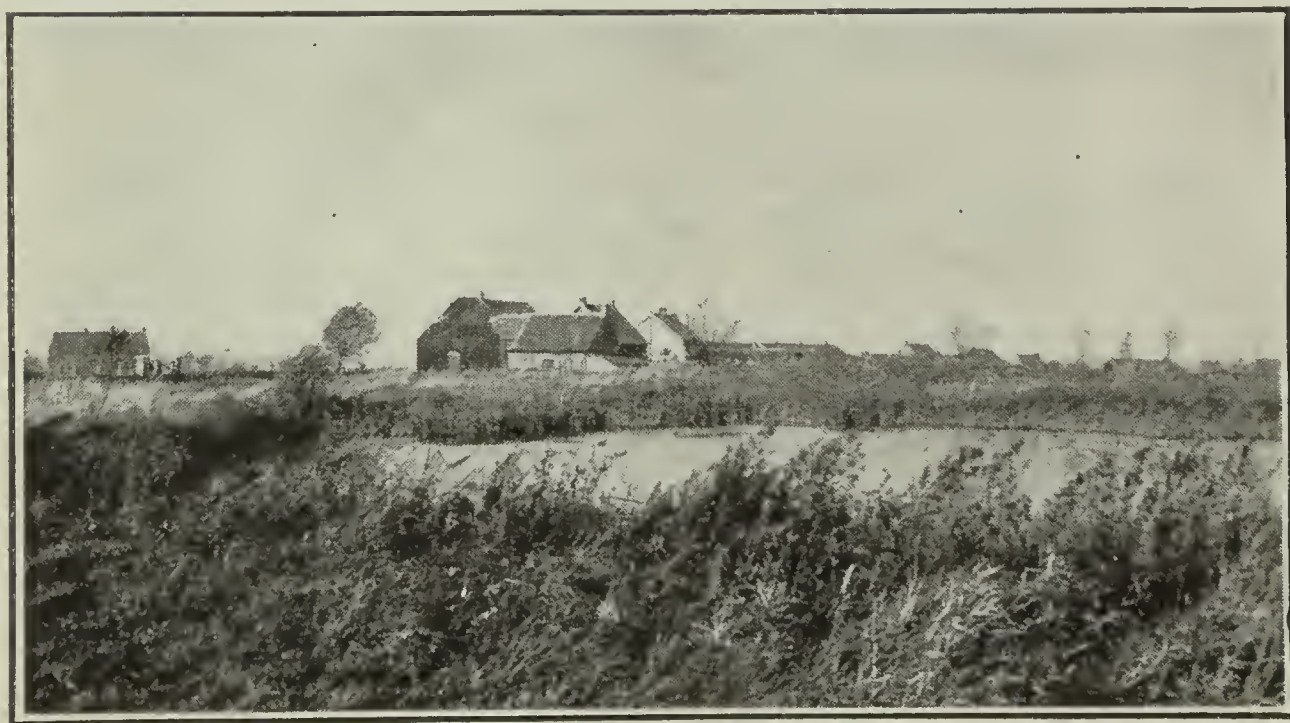
Inside the Inn, the walls are covered with pictures of the trench system of Sanctuary Wood as it was, with such trophies as German spiked helmets, Luguers, bayonets, trench knives, flare pistols, etc.

Speaking of finds reminds me of the tale of one of the British workmen in Ypres. Just after the war he was there with a unit of the Labor Companies. An old Belgian with a horse and cart came into the town and asked six of the men off duty to work for him, offering them good money. He set them digging at a certain spot, and after a time they uncovered a cellar door, a huge iron affair. The old man had a six-inch key which he used after considerable exertion and the door was opened. They peered in as he lighted a candle and beheld row on row of long-necked bottles, a regular storehouse of fine wines, brandies and champagne. The old man directed loading operations and when his cart was full gave the men their pay, and three bottles, then locked the door.

After he had gone, strong wire and various implements were tried on the lock in vain. The place was patrolled by the military police and so they dared not make an open attempt to force the

place. However, they might work from the rear, unseen, and drive a hole into the cellar wall. At night they came, the six men, armed with steel bars, levers and spades. They worked quietly and after vast labor removed the debris and soil enough to permit their attacking the wall. It was strongly made and of great

thickness, and it was nearly daylight before an opening was made large enough to permit entry. Then they flashed their light—and stared! In their hurry they had not made exact calculations. Instead of the wine cellar they had penetrated the burial vaults of a monk's institution.



St. Eloi crater No. 5 is now a peaceful pond.

CHAPTER III

HILL 60 AND SANCTUARY WOOD

THE Memorial on Hill 62 is at the crest of a series of great steps, a unique piece of work. From the top one has a good view all around. Looking down over the bare crest of Observatory Ridge, one sees the remnants of Maple Copse. Zillebeke is beyond, and its church tower is reflected in the placid surface of Zillebeke Lake. Armagh Wood is a thin, poorly grown stretch, and Square Wood seems very small. There is no thick growth around except over at Shrewsbury Forest. On the left, Gheluveld windmill and church are in plain view. Houthem is a hilltop of red roofs. Zandvoorde is a small collection of buildings. Just outside the Memorial limits, a farmer has removed all traces of the tunnel mouths that were there, and Hill 61 is but a mound of grain field. Mount Sorrel seems mostly covered with small pines.

Looking over all that area, a series of half-grown woods and hillsides, long brown and green slopes, with only Rudkin House, a long red building, and Armagh House, to interrupt the scenery, it is hard to see it as the front of the Third Division in 1916. It was on this front that General Mercer, divisional commander, was killed on June 2, during a terrific German bombardment on the line between Hill 60 and Hooze.

On June 2nd the line was held by the Seventh and Eighth Brigades. The R.C.R.'s held Hooze, the Princess Pats the north of Sanctuary Wood, and the remainder of front was held by the First and Fourth C.M.R.'s. There had been some worrying about the intentions of old Fritz for he had been driving T saps in front of his trenches and linking them up. The morning was fine and General Mercer, divisional commander, and General Williams, in command of the Eighth Brigade, decided to visit the trenches.

Colonel Ussher, of the 4th C.M.R.'s met them and was escorting them around when the enemy artillery opened a perfect tornado of fire on that particular front between Hill 60 and Hooze.

There was little refuge to be had so Col. Ussher collected some of his men in an underground place that tunnellers were excavating. Shells demolished both entrances and the colonel and all with him were taken prisoners when they managed to dig out. The bombardment lasted until noon and in the storm of fire General Mercer was killed and General Williams wounded and captured. The Canadian trenches were obliterated in places, and there were frightful casualties. Yet some survivors remained and tried to stem the German attack. The C.M.R.'s were cut to shreds. Colonel Shaw, of the First, was killed, and so was Colonel Buller of the Princess Pats. All along the German masses advanced. They poured over Mount Sorrel and over Sanctuary Wood, capturing two field guns there. They came over Observatory Ridge and into the communication trenches leading to Maple Copse, where the 5th C.M.R.'s were entrenched. They fought bravely and held on though Colonel Baker was killed. And at Hooze, the R.C.R.'s, though twice attacked, held on. It is all history now, that battle of Sanctuary Wood, and the re-taking of the lost ground on June 13th, but here and there one can find the unusual in the records. One such is about the R.C.R.'s, who were still holding on during the fifth of June. Corporal James and L./Cpl. Berry saw two German scouts prowling near their post in the night and they immediately opened fire on them. One of the enemy surrendered, rushing in with his hands up, but the other tried to escape, and was shot dead. The prisoner's name was given as Pri-

vate Ludwig Opokka Miedzna Krpless, of the 22 R.I.R., and I wonder if he was kidding the troops when he gave his regimental name and number.

Just previous to that attack I read an account of the 49th Battalion holding a part of the line reached from Zillebeke, and of them being raided by twenty Germans. The 49th repelled them, killing the majority, and the officer and N.C.O. in charge were both captured. The N.C.O. died of wounds but the officer was reported as Lieut. W. Binder, of the 121st Wurtemburgers.

And it was on this front that all the Canadians had their turn at the Sanctuary Wood fighting and covered themselves with glory.

Sanctuary Wood in those days was a ghoulish place, a shell-wrecked desolation. Among the litter and old wire, the stumps of trees gave an eerie uncertainty in the darkness and a ghostly weirdness in the moonlight. Men hated and feared the place, and no man wished to stand on post alone. The shelling had buried men in a wholesale manner. The deluge of explosions had blown in entire sections of trench, entombing all the sentries, and it is small wonder that to this day they are recovering bodies.

At Hooze the line was held until the 28th Battalion took over on the 6th when at 2 p.m. the enemy exploded mines beneath the position and practically blew the garrison from the knoll. One company of the 28th was wiped out to within a few men. But the support companies of the 28th, in the trenches alongside the Menin Road fought stubbornly, and held on. Yet Hooze was again in German hands.

Near Hill 60, the Second Brigade had held the line with the Fifth Battalion doing heroic work. An attack was made on the third by the Seventh Battalion, and though they reached the original lines south of Mount Sorrel they were forced to return to their starting point on account of flanking fire. The Fifteenth Battalion attacked an hour later and reached Rudkin House, and the 14th fought through to a place beside them, Sergeant Topham and fifteen men getting through to the old lines. They were surrounded and only two men returned. The 42nd Highlanders and the Second

C.M.R.'s had been hurried forward during the German assaults and had kept the line from breaking, the 42nd holding the Apex during the most critical hours. The 49th was brought forward to join in the attack on the 3rd and were to be supported by the 52nd Battalion. The 60th were first to arrive at the Salient, and they were told to take the place of the 52nd, but neither battalion arrived in time, and the 49th went over in broad daylight in a desperate drive. They had terrible casualties and thirteen officers fell, but they succeeded in getting into Sanctuary Wood and establishing blocks there. On the next day the Ninth Brigade relieved them and the survivors of the Princess Pats.

Then, on the 6th, the enemy blew the 28th to fragments at Hooze, and made tremendous attacks on the 31st Battalion which was holding trenches at Zouave Wood.

The big attack on June 13th was carried out by the 3rd, 16th, and 13th battalions, in order from right to left, while on the flanks the 7th Battalion at Hill 60, and the 58th at the Apex made smaller assaults in order to confuse the enemy. The attack was made at 1.30 a.m. in a drenching rain. Col. Leckie, of the 16th, discovered that an unused trench lay one hundred yards in front, very near the enemy and in the darkness led his men to it, so as to be very near at the time of assault. German listening posts were out there but in the black night they were passed by, and then there was no way by which the Germans could reach their trench. They lay where they were until dawn and surrendered.

The attack was a complete success, and by 2.30 a.m. all objectives had been reached. One picture will serve to portray to the reader the general character of the fighting that wild night. It is found in the 13th Battalion history, an account given by an artillery officer of a wounded private who drifted back through his battery position: "We gave him a cup of tea and asked him what he had seen of the show. He belonged to the 13th and stands about 6 feet high; his kilt is covered with a brown canvas apron, and he wears a steel helmet sideways on his head. Streaks of black hair

came down over his eyes and his face is covered with mud, except where the trickling sweat made white channels down it. He has a German helmet strapped on his shoulder, three belts around his waist and carries a German rifle as well as his own. His left arm is bound in a sling but he is Blighty bound and nothing can spoil his fun. 'I was in the line that was to do the once over, and he told us to be quiet until we got the word. Me and me pal we scraped a hole in the bottom of the trench, while you fellas (the artillery) gave 'em hell. I thought it ud never stop. I takes a peek over once and ducks me bean. It sure was some sight. Them hows of ours looked like bleedin' mines goin' up. I says to me pal, 'if those is ours we're all right.' Just then it begins to slacken. And we gits the word. I shouts to Mike, 'Nip it, kid, we're off to Berlin.' You shud a seen us hoof it over No Man's Land. It was a bunch of holes strung together with weeds. Mike fell in one up to his neck but I didn't wait. It only took a few minutes to get to his front line but there was nothin' in it. 'E told us to wait for the signal to go to our old front line and we played about, bombin' out a few buggers that was playin' possum in dugouts. Then you fellas lifted again and we beats it for our old front line. It wasn't as easy as the first but when I gets to it there didn't seem to be nothin' doin' so I jumps in and out again on the other side, with Mike catchin' up. We runs against a parapet and Mike yells. 'Look out! They're in there!' I ups on the parapet and there he was. Before I could dodge he fires at me point-blank. The bleedin' bullet went between me legs." (At this stage souvenirs and all are dumped on the ground and he proudly shows us the hole through his kilt, front and rear) "It never touched me. I heaves a bomb. It hit his face but didn't bust. He fired again and missed. 'Take that you dirty dog,' I says, and lets him have another. That got him, and he cuddled up in a corner. I goes down to where Mike is pastin' them into a hole in the ground. A head shoves up and two arms and yells 'Kamerad.' I chucks a Mills in the hole and they all starts hollerin'. 'All right, come out,'

yells Mike, and fifteen crawls out and starts yellin'. 'Nix on the kamerad stuff,' I says, 'op it over there and if one of youse downs a hand I'll blow yer bleedin' heads off.' Then we gits back and 'e says 'Wot th' hell do you mean by goin' over there?' And I says: 'Lorst me way, orficer, and brings back a lump of sausage.' 'E says 'well done,' when one comes with Blighty written on one end of it and me bleedin' nime on the other. Thanks fer the fags. I'll git the nurses to feed 'em to me. Some war. . . ."

I thought of that scene as I looked down at Maple Copse Cemetery, where so many lads who knew it are now resting. A car came to the Memorial and four ladies got out. They were from England, and asked many questions. After I had explained the spot they looked at the Memorial and one said:

"I should never have made it this way. I would have had a tall tower here, and a high mast over it, and fly the Canadian flag from it all the time so that those who come to the Salient will know about this Canadian ground."

It seemed to me that she was right.

Going back to Birr Crossroads and turning toward Zillebeke, one encounters a British pillbox on the top of the rise, a huge dry-floored spot. Then Zillebeke lies below, with its ugly church tower a blunt nose back of Ypres. The lake is bush-hidden from there, and all is a mass of red brick and tiles. Around it, on the outskirts, women have spread their washing on the grass, a white circle around the redness. It was in Zillebeke, after the war, that one of the metal searchers found the body of an English soldier with \$600 of Canadian money in his pockets. Who he was and how he got the money will remain a mystery.

I met a gardener near Zillebeke, and these men are the best-informed persons about the Salient. This man was a major in the British army, and he told me that a Canadian woman fell in love with the Belgian who is host at Sanctuary Wood Inn. He is a handsome mau, and speaks good English. The lady had a camera and was taking pictures of the Salient. When a roll was developed, her husband was indignant to find that it consisted solely of the handsome man in various poses about his trenches.



Hill 62 looking toward Hoge—as it was.



Hoge and Hill 62 as they are today.

There was a considerable scene, and twice the smitten one returned to visit the Inn.

From Zillebeke the road leads up to Hill 60, one of the most exploited places in the Salient. Even as you reach the few squalid homes of Zwarteleen you meet huge signs telling you of this or that canteen, advertising the sale of souvenirs, postcards and what not. Wooden canteens are there, and then one meets a fenced-in area. Inside, the proprietor is very cordial and gentlemanly and really has something to show you. He has cleaned out all the trenches on the British side of the hill. The old corrugated iron sides hold position, and duckmats are there. Strewn about is all the debris of war he uncovered in his work—countless steel helmets, gas masks, cartridge clips, rifles, bayonets, a gas alarm, a fixed rifle. There is a tall steel tower with steps, up which you go at your own risk and from its height survey all the Salient and much beyond. The huge electric depot at Comines, in France, is an outstanding landmark.

During the summer season tables are put up around Hill 60, and the canteens have competition from vendors of postcards, fruit, etc., and drinks—tea, coffee and chocolate. The memorials there are not impressive. One is erected in memory of fallen of the Queen Victoria Rifles, and the other is a memorial to Australian tunnellers.

All the Hill is a festering sore on the landscape. There is an immense crater next the railroad, that is water-filled in the wet season. When I saw it in December, '18, it was then a slough with the cross of a French soldier leaning over the slimy water. The Hill was so shelled and tunnelled and mined that it is a morass. Go where you will, you find traces of old shafts and cuttings and dugouts, and ruins of pillboxes. All the German ones are sunken beneath the surface and only pieces serve to show you where they lie. The memorial in front is built on one.

Down by the trenches the enterprising proprietor has cleaned the tunnels he located there. One goes down a flight of steps and into the evil-smelling underground. Long galleries lead in dif-

ferent directions. Supports and braces have been fixed in many places, but the whole seems a risky passage. There one can see where meals were cooked, the charred beams giving mute evidence; and remnants of old gas curtains are still in place. Spades and tools are there. I went along two turnings and into a very small gallery, low and narrow. It had water a foot deep and would daunt almost any one.

Leaving Hill 60 I went down to Verbrandenmolen, a small village clustered about a windmill, with gardens tangled at the rear and savage dogs tethered among them. At the mill I tried to talk with the old man there, but he was an unfriendly sort. The war, he said, was nothing to him. He hated such months as August and the country would suffer because the crops were not good. I told him he was lucky to have a farm after such a war, and he spat at a wall and vanished into his house. All the inhabitants of that place seemed of the same ilk. One notices that the peasants are either small-faced folk with furtive manners, or a stolid people with huge, broad faces and unwinking stares. Place a pot helmet on one of these latter kind and you are sure you are peering over the bags on a bad morning.

Of all the people in the other part of the Salient, I found those in the Lange-marck-Poelcapelle districts the most friendly. One old man there has many Canadian letters he is fond of showing. They are from a 16th Battalion man who in '15 rescued him and his mother from their cellar and took them back toward Ypres during the big attack. Afterward they corresponded. At another house there is a small tablet in front. The inscription says that the old couple are the parents of six sons who died in battle. There, too, they visit Canadian graves. And at Poelcapelle they tell you about the tragedy of the members of one burial party. They were working at the cemetery and stopped to heat their dinner and make tea. As they sat around there was a terrible explosion and every man was blown to pieces. Either they had made their fire over a large shell which had been fired by the heat, or they were the victims of a landmine.

GOING on, there is Larchwood Cemetery near the railway. No trace of a wood remains. Farther on is Blauwe-poort (Blue Gate) Farm, rebuilt, and then Transport Farm. The farmer there said his new buildings were much more extensive than the original ones, and his farm is well kept. The cemetery walls almost touch his buildings. Looking along the railway embankment for the dugouts that used to be there, I could only see one, a half-hidden concrete entrance to the place they called "the doctor's dugout." Over on the right on the banks of Zillebeke Lake, there is one surviving shelter, and in the field are two small British pillboxes.

Another turn and you are at Shrapnel Corner, now a place of roaring traffic, trucks and buses and farm wagons, hauling huge loads of flax to be sent to the River Lys for soaking. It is Saturday night in Ypres and all the women are scrubbing store fronts and sidewalks. Sunday is All Saints Day, and there are the decorations. The cinemas are almost deserted in spite of their flaring signs which remind one of ads in the Wipers Times, such as:

CLOTH HALL, WIPERS

The Great Silent Percy
(Brings the house down)

The Hunny Company in their little Song
Scene entitled:

"Star Shells softly falling on you
and Me."

THE BROTHERS WIZZ BANG

(These merry little fellows get there
every time)

Special performance of the "Queen of
the Movies" known as

GOOD OLD NUMBER NINE

Guaranteed Change of Scenery Every
Night

This is the best ventilated hall in the city.

In the morning there is a jabber of guttural voices in the Grande Place. Six hundred Germans have arrived by special train and are in the Salient to pay homage to the graves of fallen comrades. They are in organized parties, and are loaded into buses and cars and go away. Then the people of Ypres gather and form a procession extending from the Menin Gate to far beyond St. Martin's Cathedral. Each society and club and

organization is represented, and thirty-one banners of different design are carried. Three thousand people are in the parade and they place wreaths on all the memorials in Ypres. It is the same in other cities and towns.

In the late afternoon the Germans return and gather in the cafés to drink thirstily and to play cards in a noisy, good-humored fashion. The Belgians do not like their noisy manners on this Sabbath of decoration, and when a grand chorus of eighty-five voices attempts to stage an open-air concert in the Grande Place, the chief of police appears and stops it curtly. The Germans resent such action, and declare they will not come again to Ypres.

Going up to Hill 60 again on Monday, I kept on and then turned right on what is marked on the map as the "Damm Strasse Road." It ends, or is broken, at the Ypres-Comines Canal. All the way over from the main highway I came through muddy lands and one old cart trail which is the road. On it a cart was halted, and a glum-looking farmer was washing chicory in a water hole in the ditch, assisted by a stolid, red-faced woman. They seemed as lonely as Western settlers.

At the canal one goes down into a chaos of destruction. Once engineers tried to build a bridge there, and treacherous soil prevented them. All the masonry and brick work was shattered in the war. The canal has but a few stagnant pools of water, and it runs through the most desolate and tragic section to be seen in Belgium—the Bluff. Looking about, one feels that no man has been there for thirteen years. I plunged through a fringe of small trees and clambered in and out of two immense craters, then found myself in a horrible wilderness.

All the ground is cratered and gullied, with great raw crevices seemingly without bottom, and there is a pervading odor of decay. In places one finds iron rods and cement fragments of some pillbox. Again there is corrugated iron, and a shapeless hole that may have been a trench or a dugout entrance. German helmets, dud shells, equipment, water-bottles, and old rifles are there, protruding here and there. In some areas not a

weed or blade of grass is to be seen, the land apparently being poisoned against all growth. Then there are patches of brambles, blackberry bushes hiding holes, pitfalls that almost bar the way. In and out around the worst places there are countless rabbits. They jump from under your feet and often dash into holes. I stumbled into a flock of partridges, then three or four pheasants whirred up from a covert. Never would any one expect such a wilderness, and from that place you cannot see a trace of human habitation. Only the sky above you seems fit and clean. It is a place of horror, tortured with sinister gullies and gulches, upheaved, blasted, disembowelled, an unsightliness few tourists ever see. No track is there, no path, no way of approach. Two years ago a man came and asked for diggers. He led them into that wretchedness and asked them to dig at a certain spot. They uncovered a portion of trench shelter in which fourteen skeletons were squatted with their mess tins. All had been killed as they awaited their tea, and the place blown in. One is almost afraid to tread that ground, and after nightfall it is a place of ghouls.

Many Canadians of the First and Second Divisions knew the Bluff. New Year Trench, the Crater, Gordon Post, the old International, Bean and Pollock trenches made a front that all detested, a death trap to be avoided.

GOING back to the crossing I climbed the bank and was near the ruins of the Château Hollebeke. The Hollebeke church seemed quite near. Pillboxes dotted the fields there, in which one lone man was working. Several of these pillboxes are dry and as clean as if just vacated.

Going up the slight grade and following a winding road over the crest, one is soon near St. Eloi. Two water-filled craters are on the right, and the ground has sunken where a third was filled when the military made a road there. From their position on a map one would judge that these are numbers 3, 4 and 5, of the craters fought over in April, '16, by the Second Division. Just inside the village there is another huge crater, a mine belonging to the Messines attack of '17. A pretty chalet has been built beside it,

a very modern building, and there is a rustic bridge, a statue and a trellis on the grounds. Shelly Farm has been rebuilt, and Piccadilly, and the craters are surrounded by rank grass and a few small trees. A Belgian was digging a ditch across his garden and as I came along he pointed to a limber wheel he had uncovered. Beside it was a steel helmet and the lower half of a mess tin.

Glancing over Canadian records, one finds much mention of St. Eloi. There is the story of two enemy bombing attacks on the 18th Battalion, of their own raid in July. Of the first daylight raid on the Western Front, made by the 19th Battalion on a line from St. Eloi to the canal. It was on the 26th of July that the 18th got into the enemy trenches in their raid, and they got there without raising an alarm. Only one Boche was patrolling the line and the garrison was in a second trench well back. The front trench was merely a bluff. And it was here at St. Eloi that the Princess Pats made a most courageous attack on the "mound" in March, '15.

While getting a picture of the village I met a veteran of the 5th Battalion who was much interested in the ground near the Bluff. "We had it Jake down at Plugstreet and Messines," he said, "and then they brought us back here in the spring of '16. The right brigade had the Bluff to look after, the centre one had from Diagonal to Hill 60, and the left brigade was near Armagh Wood. On the night of April 16th we relieved the 10th Battalion in trenches opposite Hill 60. 'A' Company was on the right, astride the Ypres-Courtrai railway at the bridge; 'D' Company in the centre, and 'C' Company on the left along Hill 60. 'B' Company was in battalion reserve at Larch Wood, three hundred yards behind. No guy that was there'll forget that trip. We had to use them catapults they had for throwing bombs. You tightened the springs by using a sort of double windlass. And they had the Stokes guns in there for the first time. At night you'd hear the boys singin' 'Don't go down in the mine, Daddy,' when we had to go down in Berlin tunnel to pass out bags of blue mud. On our sixth day there rum-jars and sausages came over steady and we had men detailed to watch for



Transport Farm from the railway embankment.



The bluff at the craters is a swampy morass.

them and give warning. The Cutting was shelled and the Dump and the railway and the colonel, 'Daddy' Dyer, had to shift his headquarters mighty sudden. He went over the railway to Lovers' Walk. The next day old Jerry shelled again, from Jackson Street to the bridge. Then he smashed Lovers' Walk, Bensham Road and Zillebeke Street. All our trenches got the same dose, and it was bad medicine. Our guns opened up on Hill 60 and Jerry let up on us about five o'clock. We'd been half wiped out if the men hadn't got into a tunnel at Knoll Road and at Berlin tunnel. The 2nd Battalion relieved us and it was morning before we got back to Poperinghe. Jack Pearcey, one of our chaps, threw a sixty-pound trench bomb out of the trench before it could explode, and got the M. M. for it. Corporal Strutton had only his head shoved out of a heap of earth and we thought he was dead. We pulled him out and found he was warm and had to rub and roll him. He was so numb he couldn't speak though he'd seen us all the time."

Going back to the craters and looking over the long slope of green pasture and plowed fields I tried to picture it as the sea of mud it was when the Second Division had their fearful struggle there. Mud and mire, rain and mist, did as much to defeat them as did the enemy, and luck played directly against them.

The new houses in the village are horribly red, and it will be years before time tones them to the gentle tint of the homes outside the battle area. A few men plod about, and heavy carts rattle down the paved roads, and women clatter about in their clogs and scrub the doorsteps and gossip.

In front of the village the two great craters are stagnant pools, with tall rushes and rank grass about them, and a few small trees.

In 1916 the British were holding that St. Eloi front, and they had decided to attack the enemy just at the time the Canadians were to take over. All the mound and its trenches had been mined, and on March 27th these mines were fired, and the British attacked. Six huge craters, and a chaos of debris and mangled bodies were all that were met in the first rush, then the Germans got into

one crater and held on until they were ousted in a final attack on April 2nd. One crater was well over on the right of the front. It was called No. 1. Then four large craters were close together and from right to left were named 2, 3, 4 and 5. Some fifty yards to the left again were craters 6 and 7, one of them of earlier origin. Before the attack the front had been a German salient into St. Eloi, and after the attack the front was two hundred yards beyond the craters, a reverse salient into German territory. It was raining most of the time and both sides had shelled that front constantly. Added to this were the mine upheavals, so that the whole was a waist-deep mire, almost impassable.

The Second Canadian Division took over the front from the British attackers. They found the line a series of shell craters and parts of an old German trench, in which the worn-out men squatted among the wounded. The 27th Battalion took over the right of the front, astride the St. Eloi-Wytschaete Road, and holding most of the ground in front of the four craters. One strong point on the right was called Fredericton Fort, and it was used as advanced headquarters. The 31st relieved on the left, and found the line there in a terrible condition, mostly isolated posts. The strong point in the centre of the line was called Campbelltown Corner.

After a survey of the situation the powers behind decided that the 28th Battalion should assist in making the line stronger. And a trench was to be dug as a support line between the front and the craters, while communication trenches were to be cut between the craters. On the morning after this decision the 28th began moving the wounded back and digging the trenches, but at ten o'clock a terrific bombardment began, a shelling of the weakest part of the line, the centre positions. A garrison of 90 men of the 27th were holding that ground and 67 of them became casualties as the trench, as it was, ceased to exist. The survivors lay about wherever they could find shelter.

On the night of the 5th, the 29th commenced a relief of the front line, as the conditions could only accommodate the strength of one battalion. They could

not find the company of the 31st which had occupied the posts on the immediate left. This company and its two machine-guns had been wiped out by the bombardment, only one wounded man crawling back. The Fifth Brigade sent up four Lewis guns and crews. Lieut. Browne in charge of the 22nd, Lieut. White of the 25th, Lieut. Lockhart of the 26th, and Sergt. Naylor in charge of the 24th. These were placed in position in front of the four big craters at the outpost line.

At three in the morning a terrific shelling began and all that tortured ground was upheaved again. Shells rained through the darkness and fountains of filth erupted in all directions while men were buried, dug themselves out and were buried again in the frightful mire. At dawn the Germans came, a column advancing down the St. Eloi-Wytschaete Road. A post there had a few survivors and these opened fire. The column at once swung to the right, toward the canal. Lieut. Browne, of the 22nd, had been left there with his crew and forty men as the 29th officers were trying to ascertain what had happened to the remainder of the 31st. One platoon of them had got into an old part of a German trench, while the remainder had got into craters 6 and 7, thinking they were holding craters four and five.

Browne and his men opened fire and killed twenty of the enemy at short range, then the Lewis gun jammed and only one rifle would continue to fire. All weapons had been smothered with mud time and again. The Germans, about four hundred of them, broke through where posts had been erased, dashed across the new trench the 28th had dug, and got into the craters 2 and 3. They overwhelmed small working parties engaged there. As soon as the craters were put in condition for defense the Germans got into craters 4 and 5 without any opposition, posted guns there, and then tried to invade craters 6 and 7. The 31st platoon in the isolated trench enfiladed them neatly, while the crater garrisons fought bravely. The Germans were driven back with severe losses.

The men left in the front line were now between two fires, and they began to make their way toward Fredericton

Fort on the right. Officers of the 27th and 29th were there, with five Pioneers and sixteen men of the 27th. The telephone line still held but they could not get assistance. The roads and trenches leading to the front were being shelled too heavily for reinforcements to advance, and the artillery dare not open fire without being more sure of the position of the enemy.

Browne, seeing that he was cut off completely, followed the Germans into the support trench, hoping to escape by that easier route. He had five men of his own crew still with him, some 29th, and he found a party of the 28th who joined him. The 26th Lewis gun post had been wiped out, gun and men, and only one man survived at the 25th gun position. He joined Browne. The Germans saw them and tried to block the trench. Browne and his men charged with clubbed rifles and bayonets and cleared the way, killing all who opposed them. Then Germans from number 2 crater tried to head them, and were repulsed. Browne then got Sergt. Naylor and his crew who had survived, and reached Fredericton Fort. Finally the artillery agreed to bombard crater number 2, and during the shoot the survivors got back to the old front line behind the craters. Only the craters 6 and 7 remained in Canadian hands, the 31st hanging on grimly. The 28th were ordered to attack, but it was almost impossible to get through the mud, and there were no means of knowing where they were going. During the relief one of the British officers left to guide the Canadians, confessed that the week's shelling and the blowing of the mines had so changed the contours of the area that he was completely bewildered. And now it was raining and a heavy mist hung all the day, obscuring everything. At night the blackness was absolute, and to add to all there was the mistaken idea that the craters the 31st were holding were craters 4 and 5.

The Staff, far back, judged from the messages they received that a small party of the enemy had got through and into two craters, and that the Canadians were on both sides of them. They ordered the attack continued. So on the 6th the 27th and 29th Battalions attacked

craters 2 and 3 on the right, while the 28th and 31st Battalions were to occupy craters 4 and 5 on the left. Mixed in direction, in the wet darkness, with shells shrieking overhead and deafening explosions all about, some of the attackers reached craters 6 and 7 and found the 31st men still there. German patrols had strayed into their posts and had been captured. Meanwhile bombers of the 28th and 31st, led by Lieut. Murphy of the 25th, had got quite near the craters before being repulsed. And before morning the Germans, using the new trenches the Canadians had dug, managed to relieve their garrisons, who had lost heavily during the shelling of crater 2. Had the Staff but known the true conditions they could easily have withdrawn their men and blasted the enemy from the craters, or had the 31st got into craters 4 and 5 at the beginning they could have had the advantage, and the enemy would have been routed. As it was, all luck was against the maple leaf, even to the weather which would not clear. No airplanes could get aloft and all the front was in a haze.

The Fourth Brigade took over, with the 21st on the right, the 18th in the centre and the 19th on the left, this battalion taking over craters 6 and 7. And on the night of the 9th the 20th Battalion was put in the line between the 18th and 21st. An attack was made and the 21st Battalion managed to capture crater 1 and Fredericton Fort. A Lewis gun team of the 20th, assisting at the craters, repelled an enemy attack and captured three prisoners. At this time Private Warn of the 29th got back to the lines after lying out in the mud for nine days, subsisting on water and rations foraged from corpses.

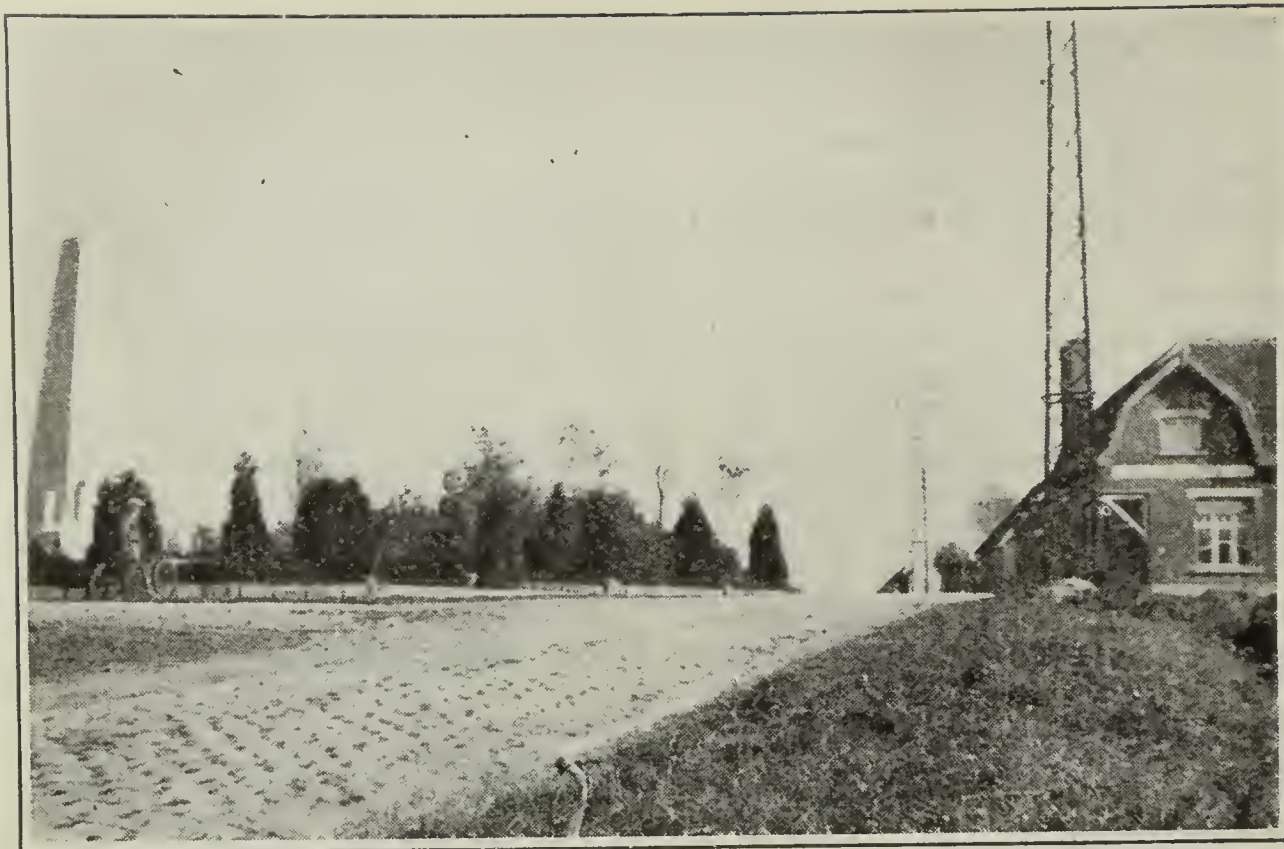
The Staff ordered that fresh attacks be made. The Germans must be routed from their positions between the Canadian craters. The mistake about craters 6 and 7 was a most tragic matter. On April 11th the Fifth Brigade took over, the 26th on the left, the 24th in the centre and the 22nd on the right. The 25th took over the craters 6 and 7. The Germans had been extending the Canadian trench back of their craters and from this they launched four determined attacks on the morning of the 14th, but

the 25th garrisons repelled them each time with heavy losses. Lieut. Farish, of the 25th, was in command over at crater 1, and twenty-five of the enemy charged that post in broad daylight, and were slaughtered.

Enraged by these repulses the enemy bombarded craters 6 and 7 most ruthlessly, and bombed them, but still a remnant of the garrisons hung on till next day when they were relieved by the 24th. The Germans attacked again, and after a furious struggle were once more driven back, and on the night of the 18th the 29th Battalion took over the positions, after the 26th had had a turn in them. Lieut. Myers had forty men with him in crater 6, and Lieut. Biggs had another large garrison in crater 7. The enemy was determined to gain possession, and at two o'clock in the morning began a most hellish fire, blasting earth and water, men and machine guns in all directions, smashing the crater edges to nothing. Biggs and his men were blown from their holdings, and the few dazed survivors taken prisoners. Myers held on till only five men remained then they struggled back to the front line, only one man remaining unwounded when they reached the sole one of those two garrisons.

On the night of the 20th a 29th Battalion patrol reached the craters and found that even the enemy could not hold them. They were two masses of mud and slime and dead bodies, frightfully intermingled, and all that area had become a morass. The continued shelling had made it worse than a swamp. It was an agony, an ordeal, just to make one's way through it, let alone to attempt an assault, and so the Canadians left that place, bitter with the too-late knowledge that had they but had the information fine weather would have given them, they could easily have routed the enemy and held the craters. Luck, however, rode with the Germans every hour, day and night, of that heart-breaking month.

LEAVING St. Eloi, I went down the winding road to Voormezeele, and the only break along the way was Bus House Cemetery and a farm at Bus House. Voormezeele is a very pretty



Graventafel on the old plank roadway.



"Plugstreet." In the churchyard cemetery some Canadian soldiers are buried.

village. A line of trees on the left hand and large yellow stacks on the right make for a pleasant entry to the town, while the homes and shops are not so crowded and ill-placed as in many of the villages. There are several white walls and green shutters, and the church is a handsome structure. It is a most pleasant place and the people there seem unusually cheerful. A red-faced old chap spoke to me in good English and told me about a Canadian's love affair. The veteran belonged to the first division and wore kilts. He met a lady of Voormezele at Dickebusch, where she was staying with her mother during the first year of the war, and made love to her. They continued seeing much of each other, and then, after a long session in England, the war over, the Canadian returned and married—the mother! The Canadian, he said, did not seem a particularly happy man. The daughter lived with them, as she had refused to leave.

Turning back, I went through St. Eloi again and up the Wytschaete road, past Piccadilly Farm. Looking back, Voormezele is as pretty as a painting, and the Château Segrand, newly built, rises above the red roofs to complete the picture.

On the left, going toward "White-sheet," the ground is swampy and poor. As you reach the rise there is a pillbox squatted on a mound, its opening leering like an evil eye. Wytschaete itself is ugly of approach. It is a town without trees or beauty of any sort. Corrugated iron has been freely used about all its outbuildings, and the streets have ditches with slimy water pooled at regular intervals. A huge pillbox is butted against a house and used as a tool shed.

MORE open fields and I was at Messines, another village lacking beauty. Even the Grande Place is ugly, with litter strewn about. At a break between shop fronts one gets a glimpse of back gardens, a hopeless mess of weeds and corrugated iron, refuse and goats. On a corner by a café, chicken wire fronts the two streets and a flock of hens feed there on discarded vegetables and refuse thrown over the fence. The cafés and shops are painted in start-

ling blues and yellows and bright greens, and the only relieving feature is the home of the burgomaster, a really attractive bungalow at the head of the square. It was noon, and I went into a café to get lunch. Eleven men were in there, toasting each other and having a real celebration. They were farmers of that district and all belonged to the sales organization that so assists the Belgian farmers. They had received good prices for their fall produce and were well satisfied.

In the hotel where I am in Ypres, the Hotel Splendid, a "splendid" hotel in every sense of the word, there is an inscription placed prominently alongside the Ypres coat-of-arms, or rather two inscriptions. They read: "Keep your husband's beer glass filled and you will be happy," and "Drink beer as a medicine and you will be long reaching your grave." But these signs were not aloft at Messines, and these farmers had something better than beer. Soon they discovered that I was a Canadian and seven of them could speak English.

They were all farmers who had been in the locality before the war, but then they had rented their farms from landlords who lived in the châteaux. Now they all owned their farms. They had earned enough to purchase them through their work of searching for metal after the war. They told me that their average pay in good territory was \$20 per day, and many days they made much more. Then they received fifteen francs for each British soldier they found, and five francs per German. One man found a body on which was a fine gold ring engraved with a name. There were no other means of identification, but this man was honest and he gave in the ring, hoping that it could be used to find the man's name. It was so, and the widow came from England to attend the burial. She gave the Belgian 5,000 francs for his honesty.

All those men spoke French, not Flemish, and their sons mostly worked in the bigger towns, going in by autos. All were doing well and quite satisfied with the present conditions in Belgium. They had been around when the Canadians were on that Messines-Ploegsteert front and had all the soldier's slang, such as

"Jake-aloo," "Cushy," "Blighty," etc. One jovial chap suggested that they sing for me. As we were not a great distance from Armentieres I expected the chorus of the old favorite. But no. With great vim three of them broke into song:

"When you go up to the farm,
With your rifle on your arm,
You want to watch old Fritz or
he will send a whizz bang there,
Send it softly through the air.
The beggar wants you. His mem-
ory haunts you.
So keep away from Zillebeke, dear
old Zillebeke,
Away from Zillebeke Farm."

They clashed glasses over my table, spilling much liquid, and madame came with a war whoop and there was a din reminiscent of other days back of the lines. All insisted on shaking hands with me after each drink they had, and many strange things were told, chief of them being the story of a certain sergeant-major of the Third Brigade who fell through a loft with a girl down at "Plugstreet." They had been gathering hen eggs.

After a complete round of handshakes and more cries from madame, I made my escape. In '18, after the war, Messines was a place of craters and brick heaps. There seemed piles of broken brick wherever one looked, and only a few Nissen huts were about. Now the craters seem no more numerous than the ponds at St. Eloi.

Going down from Messines, one enters the delightful farm area about the River Douve. The "river" is a small stream that wanders along the meadow in a most leisurely manner and along its way nurtures many willows. These trees and fresh greens, the farms with their yellow stacks, and the many feeding black and white cattle all remind one of a placid country scene in England, and yet that ground has seen strange adventure and much bloodshed. Once that river was lined with barbed wire, and bullets snapped and crackled through the willows and shells tore the soft black earth and made of it a swamp. A farmer pointed out to me La Petite Douve Farm, first on the right-hand side, and Stinking

Farm, and Irish Farm, and Gooseberry Farm, and, farther over beside a cemetery, La Plus Douve Farm.

IT WAS early in November, '15, that the 7th Battalion carried out the first organized raid on the western front. The Seventh had a very keen scout officer, a Lieut. H. H. Owen, and he had explored no man's land until he knew every yard of it. It was he who planned the raid, and it was to be in conjunction with a similar attack by the Fifth Battalion, they to enter a point north of Red Lodge.

It was a dark wet night, ideal for such work, when Lieut. Holmes, Sergeants Ashby and Merston, and Corporals Odlum and Babcock made their way to the enemy's wire. Crouched there, they worked till midnight, and were even supplied with hot cocoa taken out to them by venturesome comrades. When finished, they had cut two wide lanes through the German barricade. Lieut. Holmes then took out a bridging party and spanned the small stream in three places, one bridge being placed within a few yards of the enemy's parapet by Sergeant Ashby and Corporal Weir. The raid was to take place at 2.30 a.m. Capt. Costigan, a bombing officer from brigade, led one party of thirteen men, and Lieut. McIllree led another. Each man wore a black mask and none carried any identification. Small electric lamps were fixed to their bayonets in such a way that they could use them without losing grip of the rifle. Lieut. Wrightson followed with a telephone and stretcher bearers.

The Fifth Battalion had bad luck. They were checked at the German trench by a ditch twelve feet wide and filled with water six feet deep. In the water barbed wire had been thrown in tangles, and it was impossible to cross over. Five men fell in and the alarm was given. The men were rescued and the raiders had to content themselves with hurling their bombs into the German trench. It was a diversion that assisted greatly the advance of the Seventh party on their front.

A sudden downpour of rain commenced and the raiders reached the German parapet without being seen or

heard. A moment, and they had jumped down among the enemy. Bombs, rifles, bayonets and pistols played leading parts. The trench was heavily garrisoned but the enemy was absolutely astounded. For twenty minutes the Canadians wrought havoc, destroying dugouts, killing and capturing. Lieut. Wrightson phoned in progress of the affair and helped handle the prisoners, then gave the retiring signal. All went without a hitch. The bridges were taken up again, and twelve prisoners were taken back. Thirty German dead were left lying in the trench besides those in dugouts, and the only Canadian casualty resulted from one man tripping on wire and discharging his own rifle.

Over on the right the church tower of Wulverghem is prominent, and thinking of the Messines-Wulverghem road reminded me of an entry on page seventy-one of "The Royal Montreal Regiment, 14th Battalion, C. E. F."

"On October 26 (1915) a German plane fell in the 14th Battalion lines, and a group of Royal Montrealers found that the pilot had been killed and his observer severely wounded. On closer inspection the Canadians discovered that the plane carried Colt Machine Gun No. 1449, a weapon which the 14th had brought over from Canada and which had been lost during the Second Battle of Ypres. Now, after six months in enemy hands, the gun dropped from the clouds into the trenches of its original owners, who welcomed it and fought to retain it against the unromantic red tape which ordered it into stores. To the men of the machine gun section '1449' was a comrade escaped from captivity, and the idea of yielding the gun to stores none would contemplate. All instructions from distant powers were accordingly 'misunderstood,' and the gun remains in the regiment's possession to this day."

From 13th (R. H. C.) war diary.

Date. Oct. 26, 1915. Hour. 9.15 a.m.

"German plane observed over our lines flying low. It was exposed to heavy rifle and machine gun fire from reserve and support trenches also to heavy shelling from anti-aircraft guns.

"Allied plane also appeared and opened fire. The German was seen to

be in distress and fell rapidly over our lines, eventually landing in the rear of Trench 139, near Leckie Avenue. A second hostile plane appeared and fire was opened; this machine, however, although probably hit and disabled, fell within the German lines. The captured machine was manned by two Germans, one officer and one pilot. The pilot was killed before the machine fell, and the officer, who was severely wounded, was made prisoner and taken to Brigade H.Q.

"Major McGibbon of this battalion secured from the captured airplane a camera fixed to a canvas cover and operated by a trigger. This carried a bullet mark but was only slightly damaged. It was sent to Brigade H.Q. The plane carried a Colt Machine Gun. The captured plane and its vicinity were afterwards heavily shelled by the enemy with high explosives."

In the war diary of the Third Brigade the account reads. "... Fired on by the 13th Battalion it turned turtle and fell at the junction of Leckie Ave. and Dragoon Alley. The pilot was killed by the fall but the observer was not seriously hurt and was captured. Several maps and photographs, a camera and a wireless apparatus were taken. The machine was not badly damaged though the Germans fired 82 shells at it while it was on the ground. Curiously enough the machine gun on the airplane belonged to the 14th Battalion and was one lost at St. Julien."

ON TOWARD Ploegsteert and it seems a short way until one is down Hennessey's Hill, at the old gates leading to the La Hutte château. I went up there and found it only a heap of ruins, as it was in wartime. A well is there, a dark hole in the yard, and, going back a distance, under a growth of bushes I found a network of trenches in very good condition. The ground is dry and iron stakes and old rivetting is still in place. They are all so covered by new growth that one cannot get a picture of them.

Down at the road, around the corner, and to Red Lodge. The château up there has not been rebuilt and there were no trenches, but a gardener told me that until last year there were perfect ones,



Vormezeele is now a pretty village.



Petite La Douve Farm, looking toward Messines.

occupied. Then farmers came and levelled all that territory.

It was at La Hutte that men digging shelters about the château ruins suddenly came to a cellar roof. They broke in and discovered the wine store, intact. Bottles by the hundred ringed the place on wide shelves, rare wines and brandies, the best that could be had. In a short time those in that sector did not care a hoot for any enemy or red-capped power. Passers-by seemed to scent the night air, or else heard something that took them up the hill. At any rate, so the story goes, by the time a frantic transport officer reached the place no men capable of action could be found. They were strewn about in blissful content and gave no heed at all. Soon a lorry was summoned, and by the aid of limbers the whole stock was transferred to the motor truck, which rumbled away to some destination, either to place the liquor where it could be reached by its rightful owners, or to distribute it among various staffs in the back areas. Each reader has only one guess.

Gazing there from that high ground at La Hutte, Warneton, Neuve Eglise and Wulverghem seem near, and Armentières looks a large city. Down on the level, all that ridge of La Hutte is a great brown bank, bush-grown. Ploegsteert Wood is an amazing place. It is all such low ground and so marshy that one cannot understand how trenches ever existed there in wartime, nor can he understand how so much of the wood survived. All the oaks have leaved and seem unharmed, and it is as if the largest part of the wood was never harmed. Again, going in among the greenness in those dark silent places, the very ground is oozing water. How did men live there under shell fire, dig in there? It is beyond me. Passchendaele seems high and dry ground in comparison.

When in that area after the war, I could not get into Ploegsteert Wood at all without risking getting bogged. It is better now, but one must watch his step. One of the gardeners told me that an English gentleman got lost in the wood this summer, fell into a deep, water-filled trench and suffered much from exposure. The willows and alders

are almost massed in places, and one has to force his way through them.

"Toronto Avenue Cemetery" sounds Canadian, yet every grave in it is an Australian's. There are two other cemeteries in the wood, all beautiful in such a settin. No other place along the front seems so fitting. There is a quiet, a peacefulness among the trees like the calm of a cathedral. Go in among the trees, and rabbits are everywhere. The authorities are going to construct a moat about the cemeteries in order to keep these brown pests from the flowers. Watch out for ditches and rotting duck-board walks, and where you see glistening dark water, long pools of it, stop and you will see traces of the old trenches. Bits of corrugated iron, rusted stakes, old trench bays still holding their form are there, with a hundred other relics of occupation. And all is mire, squelching sod, reeking dampness. It seems all one vast swamp.

Outside again, and Ploegsteert Memorial seems to fill the landscape. It is a most striking structure. Two huge white lions guard the entrance, and the memorial itself is a large columned, temple-like building, round in shape and without a roof, a most arresting spectacle in that wooded district. It is outstanding, so different that it holds one in wonder and admiration. On its panels are the names of over 11,000 missing men.

IN EVERY direction Ploegsteert is a flat unhealthy country. The town is scattered, long-drawn, its Grande Place unimpressive, half-grassed, with the usual memorial to Belgian soldiers. There are many brand new buildings and all the main street is in a state of repair, but the workmen seem affected by sleeping sickness. Three concrete roofs joined, marked "A, B, C" in front, is the old cinema the soldiers used, and at the other end one sees "Entrance Tuppence."

A Fifth Battalion man was prowling about the town, and showed me a new café which he said was exactly like the old one, an "Estaminet du Commerce," kept by a madame who used to act as barber for the soldiers. He said that a shell entered the roof of the old building

while soldiers were playing cards in the main room. Then we visited two or three other shops where he had renewed old acquaintances. All the madames spoke French and had profuse praise for the Canadians they had known. One had harbored a husky lad who was not feeling well, and when his regimental doctor came in answer to summons from her, he found that the man had a severe case of measles, and madame and her family were "closed." She had had a bad time of it, two of her own brood having the sickness, yet she was thankful for such good men, for the doctor came regularly and did all he could until all were recovered. She thinks him the hero of all the Canadian Corps.

Turning right at the Grande Place, I went out past a stretch of newly spaded earth, seeing only one man at work in a distance of more than a mile. "Plug-street" is the sleepest spot in Belgium. There was a long strip of marshy land, with long ditches, and trees here and there. Then a strong concrete pillbox just before the turn at Romarin. More low country, and we were upgrade to Neuve Eglise. It is a village of considerable size, with a very large "Grand Place." Each home seemed to possess a large black-haired dog, all as alike as if from one litter. The sidewalks were the worst I have seen in Belgium, being but a succession of mud holes and stones, with kitchen drains having openings on them at various places. The church is quite imposing, with the regular cemetery beside it and a memorial, but at one corner there is a small plot of our white stones, a soldiers' cemetery. No one was stirring except a man with a two-wheeled, covered yellow cart, who alternately blew on a harsh horn and shouted his wares. He was selling fish.

In one front yard a bulky woman was backing down the walk, dragging a length of wet cloth along the tiling. She waddled like a duck in sticky mud, and was very red-faced.

Leaving Neuve Eglise on the way to Wulverghem, one meets a landscape that is exceedingly refreshing. On the left, under the dark slopes of Mont Kemmel, are scenes that might belong to Canada. The farmland seems to be in oblongs and squares, divided by hedge-rows or lines of trees, and all is a variety of color, browns and greens. Cattle are grazing in one tree-dotted pasture, and in other places horses are drawing loads of vegetables to a distant white road. There are white-walled houses snuggled among yellow stacks and with neat hedges about them, and long dark greens of gardens. No trace is there of sinister pillboxes, corrugated iron or weed-rimmed seep-holes. No one would know that war was ever there, and Wulverghem itself is in harmony with the countryside. Many of its homes have white walls with pretty green shutters, and there are neat hedges and well-kept gardens, and tiled walks. Many of the homes are of modern style, and there are plenty of ornamental trees. It is an attractive village. Most of the people speak French and are friendly.

I talked with an old-timer who sat by a café window, and he told me of a scrap that had taken place there on the street between a Canadian and a British artilleryman who were courting the same girl. The Canadian won, giving his man a bad trimming; then the girl ditched him in favor of the vanquished one. "Women are strange," commented the old fellow, and I dare not disagree with him.

CHAPTER IV

MONT KEMMEL

AT WULVERGHEM, just on the outskirts, a small boy was speaking in English, so I stopped to chat with him and to discover who he was. His father was a Canadian, and I met him. He had married a Belgian girl, and, from what I gathered, her father had established him very snugly, giving him a good farm and home and all that is necessary to make a comfortable living in Belgium. The Canadian had taught his children, three of them, to speak English. I met his wife, a very good-looking woman, and she spoke perfect English. They used it in their conversation always, though her parents spoke only French.

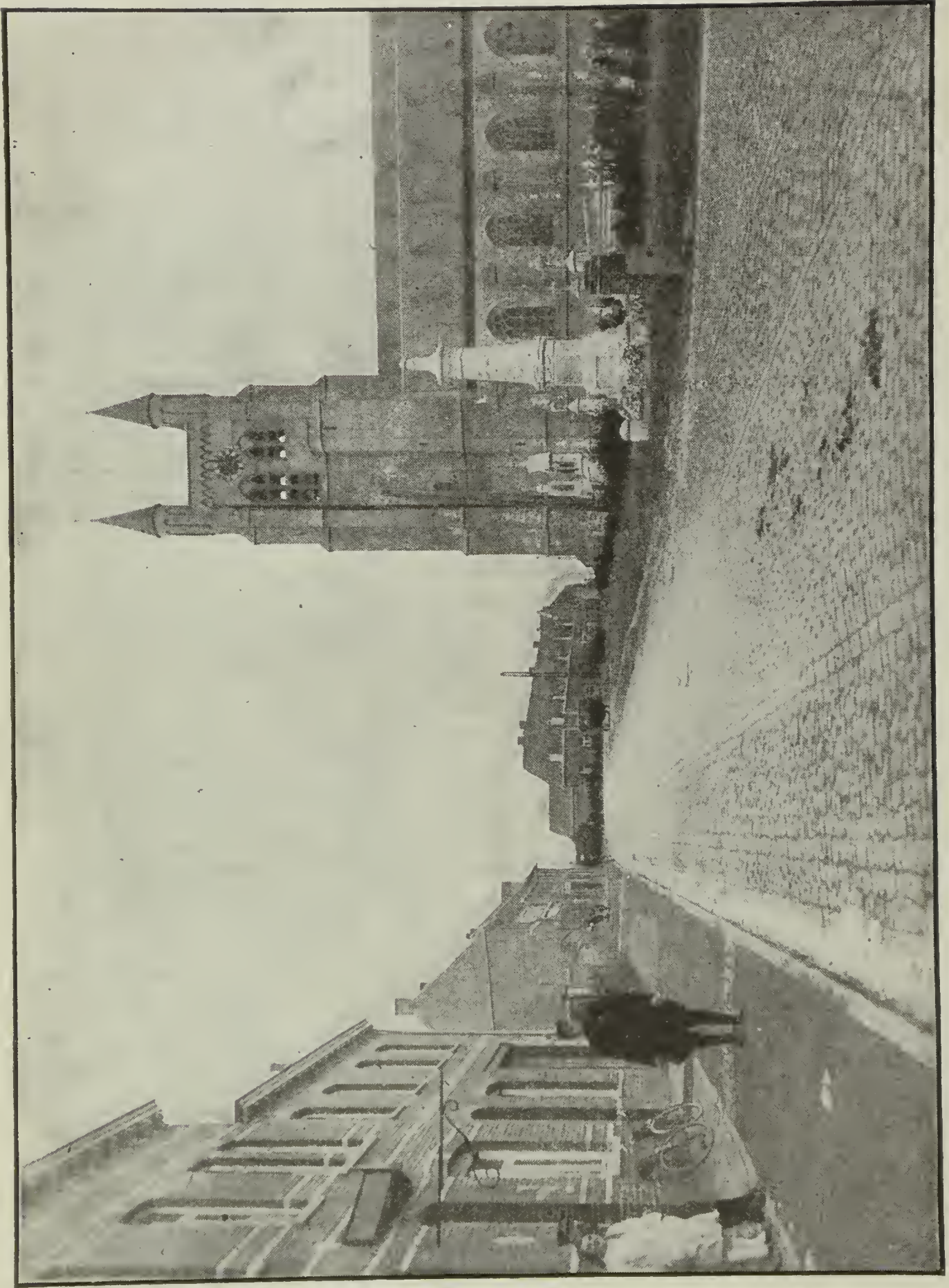
He told me that he had been with the 26th Battalion at the attack on Sanctuary Wood. He said they had found six wounded Germans in a dugout. An unwounded man had stayed with them, looking after them. He told about being at the Palmer Baths below Neuve Eglise when Fritz started shelling a sausage balloon that was aloft quite near. One of the first shells whistled in between the bath-house and another building and exploded, demolishing the unoccupied place. Another shell followed the first one. In three seconds the road leading up to Neuve Eglise was a race track for more than fifty naked men. Very few stopped to snatch up a shirt or towel. He told me that other veterans of the first division said that the Germans used to have civilians in the front line over at Birthday Farm; that they had been seen pointing out landmarks to the enemy. He seemed very anxious to talk about Canada but would not tell the name of his home town, and so I left him to his mangels.

Going on toward Kemmel by way of Daylight Corner and Lindenhoeck, it was

all a marvellous landscape. All the farms seemed very prosperous. Great fat cattle fed in the pastures. Flocks of white poultry and special pens for them were everywhere. Crows flapped in the distance, going toward Mont Kemmel. Pigeons wheeled in groups of twenty or thirty, and, back of every barn, a dozen huge pigs rooted in the soft black earth. Mont Kemmel is prettier than any painting. It is a perfect harmony of color. Greens, golds, browns, crimsons, all the tints of autumn are there in the leafy woods that mantle the hillside and cover every sign of war. The shading, in the long afternoon shadows, is beyond words.

Kemmel itself is picturesque, by far the finest village I have encountered. It is very clean, a place of hedges and gardens and neat tiled walks. There is a park with pretty lawns and pools and rustic bridges, and a cosy hotel with a row of palms in tubs outside. The square is a beautiful lawn with trees set all around it in splendid taste, and there is a pavilion at one end. A huge château and well-kept grounds and stables add to the lure of the place, and every tourist must linger longer in Kemmel than elsewhere. The château, they told me, belongs to a man who made a fortune in fertilizer.

I WENT down the road to Seige Farm, to that sector where the 25th Battalion had its breaking-in. La Laiterie Cemetery on the Kemmel-Vierstraat Road is ample proof that they were there. It seems that half the graves there are of fallen men from the 5th Brigade. There is no trace of war that I could find in that district. Where the old line ran is a plowed field, and there are many trees about, a most pleasant countryside.



Soldiers' graves are on each side of the church in Locre.

Petit Bois is a dark green in the late afternoon, and there are no marks of where Turner Town or Halifax Heights used to be.

I tried to go to Seige Farm, but the farmer there was very sullen, and the gardener advised me that he did not care for Canadians. It seems there was something about a white horse being used on certain days to make a number of turns across the field, just a small strip of plowing, then another horse would be used. The shelling of the enemy was very accurate, and so some one got suspicious of the farmer and he was taken away—never to return. At least that is the story that was told to me, and the present farmer certainly acts as if it were true.

During the second trip of the 25th Battalion to the line, the enemy mined the front trench and wiped out a platoon of "B" company, my brother being among the number. But reinforcements were rushed up and the enemy did not gain any ground by his work. Seige Farm was used as the battalion reserve and Shatter House was on the V. C. Road.

There is a story of that frontage told me by an ex-25th man, of an Imperial battery position to the right of Seige Farm, of Dinky Copse, a small wood to the right of the gunners, and a pig. Fifteen platoon had done its tour at Seige Farm where the plot was laid, and three men were elected to purloin a choice porker, property of the farmer there. They decided that the best time to take the pig would be when number four platoon took over. "A" Company would then get the credit for the deed. A pen was built in Dinky Copse in which the pig would be placed until needed. Then the "pig men" came from the support line in the dark of night and captured their booty without a single mishap. On their way to the hiding place at Dinky Copse they went past the battery position and here the porker managed to give feeble protest. No alarm was raised but when the men went to Dinky Copse the next night the pig had vanished. A systematic search was made and they were on the point of quitting when they heard something in an old cellar, the pig, nicely bedded and well-

fed. Mister pig had another trip. He was taken up to Shatter House and placed in that cellar and the best accommodations provided.

The next night, with sharpened knives and hot water in dixies, a determined quartet went to Shatter House and there committed a cruel murder. There was no squeal, but the enemy somehow developed sympathy for the murdered one, and strafed Shatter House, and one of the killers received an O. K. blighty. All the discarded parts of the pig were placed in a sandbag, and the needed parts in various carriers. The discards were thrown just in the rear of the battery position—and found there by the irate farmer. The gunners paid for the pig. Fourteen platoon had a feast of fresh pork.

It was on that front that the German snipers had different caps. They used black ones when shooting over black sandbags, and had grey ones for grey bags, and so on—a cap to match any parapet. The Germans had stoves in the front trenches to do their cooking, and the crack shots of the 5th Brigade shot away stove pipes and scattered earth from the parapets on all preparations until Otto had to desist from front-line cookery. It was in that Kemmel sector that three scouts of the 24th Battalion saw an enemy patrol. One of the prowlers was about twenty yards from the rest, and the three scouts skilfully cut him off from his fellows and brought him in, a prisoner, without any trouble.

I climbed up Mont Kemmel. When you get among the trees and bushes you discover that they hide many old scars and signs of war. Many traces of the old dugouts and constructed places are there, and a man told me that two years after the war ended, a heavy rain washed dead men from a gully and revealed a cutting full of mangled remains and weapons and equipment.

At the top, one has a view unrivalled in Belgium. Up there, looking over all Flanders and part of France, I remembered Edmund Blunden's quoting from a book of 1837, entitled "A Saunter in Belgium." The traveller looks over the Salient from Hooze, and writes: "Tall spires, peaked roofs, and crowded



Seige Farm was once used as a battalion reserve.



Dickebusch, where the Canadians are remembered as free spenders.

houses—the bustle and the business of human life in full activity; peaceful homesteads—white villages glistening in the warm sunshine—orchards teeming with golden fruit—and hither and thither the gleam of a piece of water . . . I spent an entire day on those hills; and I regretted when night obliged me to leave them, by shrouding the sweet scene below from my view.”

And that is what one sees there at Mont Kemmel, a hundred steeples “bared to view.” One seems to be looking over an entire nation; so many are the towns and villages, the endless red and dark roofs, the miles of cobbled roadway, the bright thread of streams.

COMING down from the hill, I found a road leading to Locre, a delightful narrow lane that winds in and out of fairy scenes, past small cottages surrounded by trim hedges, in and out of groves where the trees hang over the roadway. Soon Mont des Cat is looking down on one, and there are long openings of green grass and brown earth, squares of dark trees, hop poles, a grand farm, a shrine in a quiet corner, a demarcation stone; then we are going in to Locre, and a huge building over on the left is a hospice or old man’s home.

Locre is on a hill, with a cemetery fairly leaping at one from the centre of the town, an ill-kept place spoiling completely all first impressions. Cafés are full of chattering men and women—no one seems at work—and a few buses roar into the Grande Place and take on a few passengers. There are two small plots of soldiers’ graves on each side of the church, and the few narrow streets wind around in a bewildering manner.

From Locre it is not a long run into Bailleul, a place of crowded, brand new buildings and quite a businesslike atmosphere. It seems busier than most of the Belgian towns. The British guns demolished the town after the enemy had occupied it, and made a thorough job of it: I asked at many places for original owners, but could not find any until I met a cemetery caretaker who had been one of the last two men to

leave Bailleul before the Germans entered.

He and a helper were at a small canteen when the people began to leave. Word spread rapidly that the enemy was very near, and the flight was headlong. Shops and homes were left as they were, and down at the Australian stores all was deserted. He and his mate went there and selected all the best breeches, underwear and socks that they could carry. Then the other man paused and eyed the shops. The nearest was a jewellery store, and the window was full of rings, watches, etc. The owner had not even locked the door before he ran. The soldier went inside with a kit bag and filled it with all he could carry—a small fortune—then they left, and not a half hour too soon. By nightfall Fritz and Otto were having a wonderful time collecting booty. The soldier, with his rings and watches, got away all right and turned them into money, and today is running a small business in France not far from where old Dame Fortune smiled on him.

My friend told me of a couple of stout French girls who made money very rapidly in Bailleul. There were, of course, the usual egg-and-chip places, small gold mines in their way, but these girls had a brighter idea. They opened a “bathhouse.” Any soldier appreciated a chance to have a bath where there was plenty of warm water and soap, and when there was added to it the saving of all labor, well . . .

These girls charged a rather high price, ten francs, but they always had more trade than they could handle. They prepared buckets of soft soap, and had huge soft brushes, somewhat like whitewash brushes. The soldier paid his money and took his place, standing, in a huge but rather shallow tub. He simply stood and kept his gaze on the ceiling. The two girls handled the brushes. They dipped them in the soft soap and applied it, then the cloths and towels were used, and the customer stood forth more thoroughly cleaned than ever he had been at any army bath. The girls were husky, adept at their work, and would have no fooling. Some one told a certain shy young padre that

it was a bathhouse and he made no further enquiries. He paid his money and was somewhat astonished at being told to strip in readiness. Not speaking French, he did not understand things until he found himself propelled into the tub and was smothered in soft soap. He struggled manfully but his efforts availed him not, and he went forth clean—but somewhat flustered.

During the time that the submarine peril was at its worst one of those gilded ones in the high places had a brain wave. The result was that up into the fighting areas, where the front-liner was always overfed, came men with paint and brushes and they smeared strange signs in various places. Many veterans will remember among them: "Eat Less and Save Shipping." One of these artists decorated a wall on the way from Locre to Bailleul, and there the inscription remains.

BACK to Locre and to La Clytte. Passing Mont Rouge, I saw six German dugouts with elaborate concrete entrances still intact on the hillside. La Clytte is a straggling little village of a poorer type. A nun with a long file of children in tow was walking on the road. There were trees all along the way—in clumps, in the fields, along the ditches, everywhere—more trees than I observed elsewhere.

We came to Halleblast Farm, rebuilt in a grand manner, and then Dickebusch. The latter is a smaller town than I expected, of crowded buildings and a rather handsome church. Two cemeteries are near it. I made enquiries about former residents and found two old cronies, but they had only recollections of the Canadians being free spenders and rather noisy. They had no stories to tell.

Leaving there, I roamed out around the lake, going to Vierstraat, which is only a dozen or so new buildings, then back past Segrand Château, which is built entirely of concrete, all towers and jutting corners. No wood has yet been used, and the place is but a grand shell. At the old driveway the keeper's lodge is the same, a concrete exterior never finished. I crossed over to Bedford

House and found that the château there is a ruin, as it was, and I learned that it will not be rebuilt. The owner has got a huge sum in compensation for his grounds being used as a cemetery. Woodcote Farm is rebuilt in splendid style. The Swan Château, however, is another pile of ruins. In Belgium the Government helped first the farmers, got them established, and the château owners are last in getting their compensations.

And now I leave Ypres. The Machine Gun Farm is first on my right, and then we come to the Goldfish Château. Every soldier who went up to the Salient must remember it on the Vlamertinghe Road. It stood there as a landmark through all those hard years, miraculously untouched—the Château des Rosiers. For three days in the early part of the war General von Bissing had his headquarters there, and German prisoners told how he took a great fancy to the place and intended to claim it as his own prize as soon as Germany won the war. He hasn't put in his claim yet. General French occupied the château as his headquarters during the first battle of Ypres. In 1915 it became Canadian headquarters, and afterward was used as divisional centre. It was within those walls that Generals French and Foch arrived at their famous decision to hold Ypres "to the last man and the last tin of bully beef." Every other building about it was destroyed and even the fine avenue of trees was cut down by shells, but the château stood. It was always claimed that the Germans expected finally to conquer Ypres and were saving the château for their use.

Along the old "snake" road, winding, always winding between those tall elms that so many writers have described as poplars. Vlamertinghe Château, a mill, a hop store, and Brandhoek—fire corner—with a red cross still painted on its high brick wall. Red Farm Cemetery is there on the right, and rumor has it that all the men in graves there were killed by one shell. Certainly it is the smallest cemetery in the country. The inscription on one stone is extraordinary. It is the grave of three Belgian peasants who were killed, and states:

"Two civilians and one trunc," I could not understand it at all and made enquiries. They told me that one of the men had had his head clipped off by the shell. Hence he was not a "civilian" but a "trunc."

ON TO POPERINGHE, good old "Pop," looking very much the same as in the mad days. The station seems exactly the same, and I could see only three or four new buildings. There is a memorial to the British soldiers who saved Poperinghe. At Skindles Hotel, Zoe is still serving officers, but not "officers only." She will now serve an ordinary mortal, and very well. It is a splendid hotel, and she is very proud of her war career. She told me that two of her girls were killed by shell fire on March 21, '18, and that she had to leave Pop that April until the end of the war. It was at her hostel that the officers of the first and second Canadian divisions gave a farewell dinner to General Lipsett as they were leaving the Salient for the Somme.

There are quite a few British living at Poperinghe, among them some quaint characters. In the morning I talked with one very interesting chap who told me terrible stories about the Bluff when the English held it during the winter of '17. At noon I saw him at a house on one of the side streets, surrounded by a flock of children.

On to Hazebrouck, and it took a long time to find myself there, to get back the old impressions I had in war time. It seemed all changed, a different place entirely from what I had pictured it, and it took me quite a time to locate the three estaminets to which we used to go. In the first two there were new faces, strangers, but in the last one there was Madame Minnie-haha, as we used to call her. She stared calmly and waited for my order. I used her soldier's name, tried to introduce myself, but she continued to stare blankly—so many thousands had sat at her tables—until I recalled that one of our chaps, Melville, had cut a lock of her hair, a coil of it, pretending he wanted it as a keepsake. In a moment madame had seated

her hefty self and was shedding tears in French fashion.

"Those were good days," she said "All big boys, no harm. Now it is nothing but money hard to get."

I mentioned her daughter, a fine looking girl, made love to by all the soldiers, whom we called "San Fairy Ann." But San Fairy Ann was gone, married to a French boy and living down near Paris, and already the mother of four future poilus.

SITTING THERE, it was easy to let oneself go and see again that last night there before we went on to Passchendaele, Forty-Twa's, R. E.'s, artillerymen, a motley crew, all friendly. In a corner an artilleryman was trying desperately to win San Fairy Ann's appreciation. Beside our table was one at which two old "sweats" were sitting, and their conversation was better than any music hall show. One chap was one of those rare birds who used rhyming names instead of the proper word, and the other was a serious lad on his way from the Salient who wanted to describe all the failures of his "mob." Beside me sat our own "Old Bill," and he was in rare form.

There were many songs that night, but I remember particularly one that the boys called the "Salvation Army" song.

"The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling

For you but not for me:

And the little devils how they sing-a-ling a-ling

For you but not for me.

O Death where is thy sting-a-ling-a-ling,

O Grave thy victor-ee?

The bells of hell go ting-a-ling-a-ling,

For you but not for me."

And another cheerful bit:

"I want to go home, I want to go home,

The bullets they whistle, the can-nons they roar,

I don't want to go to the front any more.

Take me over the sea, where the Alleyman can't get at me,

Oh, my, I'm too young to die, I want to go home!"



The trees and bushes on Mont Kemmel hide many signs of war.



At Wulverghem an ex-Canadian soldier is a prosperous farmer.

During the lull while throats were being oiled a small figure entered, a forlorn figure, dressed in khaki much too large, and decorated with canteen medals (beer stains). Apparently the newcomer had not the necessary wherewithal to purchase beer. "I'll give yer a song mytes," he said, looking around. Then he put back his cap, disclosing a very dirty face, and began in a terrible voice:

"She was poor but she was honest,
Victim of a rich man's whim:
For he wooed her and seduced her
And she was done wrong by him.
It's the sime the whole world over
It's the poor gits all the blime,
An' the rich gits all the pleasure,
Isn't it a bleedin' shime!"

Somewhere along about the sixth or ninth verse some one offered him a drink, and that, of course, was what was wanted. It was a blessed lull, and during it my complaining old-timer on the right became audible. ". . . an' the b——y cook."

"What about yer babbling brook?" asks the rhymer.

"I'm just reachin' 'im when the perisher shouts, 'any more for any more,' and then tips the bloomin' dixie. I could 'ave murdered 'im, I could, strite."

At this point Old Bill gets vocal, and pulls one of the platoon's favorites. He rises, looks around solemnly, and orates:

"Today's my daughter's wedding day,
Ten thousand pounds I'll give away."

There are cheers and handclaps.
"Good old Bill."

Another pose.

"On second thoughts I think it best
To put it in my old oak chest."

Groans. "You old blighter, Bill."

The voice on the right again. ". . . an' 'im shakin' in 'is shoes every time 'e fears that rubber gun, an' mykin' aht 'e 'as trench fever to git dahn the line . . ."

"Come on, madame, more beer, compre." It's the rhyme! again. "Toot sweet, and the tooter the sweeter."

It's almost closing time, and in steps a sergeant of the police. Groans. Sighs. Then shouts for beer at the last second. "Allay, madame!"

And madame, looking at the sergeant, says: "No bon. Fini kapoot. Napoo. Buckoo bier. Vous zigzag."

A voice: "Some say, 'Good old sergeant,' but I say—"

The door is opened, and the patter of rain is heard on the cobbles. "Send her down, Davy." "Roll on, duration."

But there is no move to go. "One little song, and we're away," say some one, and the sergeant, looking outside, seems agreeable. How many times has that song been sung at some time-killing moment?

"Oh, we pushed the damper in; yes,
we pushed the damper in,
And the smoke went up the chimney
just the same;
So we pulled the damper out; yes,
we pulled the damper out,
And the smoke went up the chimney
just the same."

The smoke was still going strong after the fifth stanza when the M. P. gets wise that it will continue to do so and gives his orders.

"Après la guerre, old top." "Good night sar'gint."

Then all were filing out except the artilleryman in the corner, who is making a last fervent appeal to San Fairy Ann. He is twisting in his chair, shrugging his shoulders in an attempt to bolster his French. And San Fairy Ann, smiling down at him, asks, "You hitchey-koo?"

All outside. Voices mingling. Calls. Wet darkness. Boots on cobbles. An enquiry of the defeated suitor. "Yer a gunner, chum?" An assenting grunt. "Well, all I kin sye is, yer was shootin' short, sime as up front." Then from another quarter, deliciously sarcastic: "Oh, kiss me sar'gint before I go."

What times! What lads!



—Photo by Colin Russel, Fort Frances, Ont.

In 1918 Arras was a weird and ghostly city. Here is a view of the Grande Place taken in that year.



The Grande Place, Arras, 1932.

CHAPTER V

THE ROAD TO ARRAS

ARMISTICE MORNING, and the bugles at the Menin Gate. It is not as impressive as I thought it would be, as all the ceremony is scheduled for six o'clock in the evening and not many have thought about the eleven o'clock signal. It is a damp, heavy morning, and all the people seem affected by the weather, so I have small regrets as we leave Ypres on our way to Arras.

We go via Kemmel, where the driver must make a stop. While there, an old woman comes along the street and hears me mention Canada. She stops and tells us her history. She was the postmistress of Kemmel before the war, and when the soldiers came made much money in the egg-and-chip business. She also did washing for the boys, but not, as they thought, at her home. She had no coal with which to heat water, and so her daughter would take the clothing to a village where the military had a coal dump and the civilians profited by the surreptitious use of it.

This process of money-making continued until '18, when the Germans swarmed over Kemmel and all that area. The daughter was away with the washing, or rather returning with it, when a patrol of the enemy came racing across the fields and trapped her. "Ah," they said, "you do the soldiers' washing. Very well, you can do ours." And from then until after the armistice that girl was attached to the unit as regimental washerwoman.

In the meantime, her mother had heard the machine guns close at hand and had taken alarm. She went out of her house to have a look about, saw the men in grey, and ran just as she was without ever going back into the house. They shot at her, but she escaped when several of the soldiers in the village were unable to do so. She did not get any word

from her daughter, and did not know what had happened to her. After the war she went back to Kemmel and stayed in hopeful waiting, and, to her great joy, the daughter returned. A Scotch sergeant in the village was greatly attracted by the girl's story, and finally he married her. They now have a fine brood of children and the Scot is prospering in his adopted land.

This man had a brother who served many long, hard months at Ypres, and was always obsessed with a premonition that he would be buried there. When the war ended he joyfully went home. Two years ago he had saved enough money to make a pilgrimage along the old war fronts and came to Kemmel. From there he set out to see Ypres. Whether or not it was the excitement at again seeing the town that had held such horror, he was overcome at the Lille Gate and dropped dead there. He was buried in the Ypres cemetery, fulfilling his long dread.

We came to Ploegsteert and crossed into France at Le Bizet, where an old woman serves eggs and chips as in war time and can tell you endless stories about the soldiers. Leaving there, we sped on into Armentières. The town was a big surprise. Its buildings are all very new and the shops were city-like. The main square was really impressive. We seemed, after the sameness of the Salient towns, to have entered another world. Every place had a flag flying, all the population seemed in holiday attire. Such a contrast, the faces, to those we had left. Every one seemed cheerful happy, responsive.

AT TOP of Messines I had had a last look back at the Salient, and it seemed as if the light mists hanging about the low places were really phantoms;

as if, in that drab landscape, Last Post were forever re-echoing. There is a dreadful, solemn depression that engulfs one, a something about that enormous graveyard of countless dead that grips one and changes him. You see it in the faces of the inhabitants. All year long they see people coming to visit the dead; all year they work their ground with careful touch, never knowing when they will uncover a corpse or a live shell. It has made them the dour, dead-eyed race they are.

The youth of that land, sensing that feeling, are unconsciously combatting it. You see it in their foolish, loud-voiced night orgies, their drinking and hoarse shouting. They are but trying to defy that hovering something that is over every acre of the Salient. One farmer near Zillebeke had plowed his field for six successive years without removing more than a few odd shells. In the seventh year a small stake protruded. He tried to pull it up but could not, dug down—and discovered an airplane. It was there under ground as it had crashed, the pilot and observer still in place. They had been completely buried by tremendous shell fire.

Armentières does not call it Armistice Day, but The Victory. They had their band out and paraded to the memorial, where they laid a wealth of beautiful wreaths in memory of their fallen; then they returned to the cafés and had a glorious time in celebration of victory over the foe. A dozen girls were in gay costume, red, white and blue, the colors of France, and one wore a kilt and sporran. I asked who she was, and there was a shout, "Mademoiselle from Armentières," they yelled at me, and all had a drink in her honor.

In that half hour I shed all effects of the Salient. Here was the cheer and fun we all had back of the lines in France. These people were unchanged. To them a Canadian is still a bon soldat, and they were eager to do anything to assist me. I left there glad, warmed with their spirit, tingling. It was wonderful.

As we went along we saw that every small village was celebrating the day, that all had laid wreaths at their memorials, that each place had its girls in

gay rigouts. We were shouted at, waved to, and in two or three places simply had to slow down and shake hands with a score and be taken into the estaminet for further celebrating. It was a touch of that first Armistice Day.

Finally, we arrived at Neuve Chapelle. Three things are there which at once arrest the eye. The first is the "Christ of the Trenches." Thousands upon thousands of the French go there every year to see it and marvel. When the enemy came, the line was at such an angle that a crucifix was at the corner of a trench. Gunfire dislodged the figure and it dropped into the bay. All trace of the shrine was shot away, but the figure in the trench survived. It was handed over with trench stores each relief, always entered as, "One crucifix, G. S. Pattern." At the close of the war it was still there, minus legs and one arm, but the rest of it, especially the face, unharmed. Today it is at a new shrine, at the feet of a new figure on a new cross.

Across the road is a lone cross, with a soldier's name. Enquiring at the estaminet, I found that it had been erected by an English lady. Her son was killed at the crossroads, and buried there hastily. Surviving comrades could not find the grave, though the lady herself came to France with them and did all in her power. She offered \$500 to the gardener or soldier who could locate the body, and for weeks they dug everywhere in that vicinity, and failed in their search. She then erected the cross. The old man returned to the crossroads and rebuilt his café. He was planting his garden in the spring when he found the son. He knew nothing of the circumstances, and only reported it to the Commission in the regular way. The soldier was placed in one of the cemeteries, and no reward was paid the old man, for which he still grieves. Strangely, the original cross has been left there.

Beside it is the famous Indian Memorial, erected in honor of the Indian troops who died there in thousands, largely through the severity of a French winter. It is a high wall, circular, fronted by a tall column with a star at the top, and flanked by two tigers. It is an unusual thing; different from all others.



Bethune has been rebuilt in the modern manner.

WE STOPPED again in Bethune, in the square, with all the buildings gay with flags and colors, banks and stores most prosperous looking, the shop windows displaying first-class goods. In the centre of the square is the belfry only of the old church. All the rest was knocked down by shelling. Signs around it forbade parking near it. A park in another part of the town is splendidly arranged with flower plots, lawns, young trees, walks and seats in four great sections. The surrounding buildings are all of most modern type, with white walls or white strips on dark walls and in bungalow style. There were a number of donkey carts about, women selling flowers and vegetables, and on the sidewalks were racks of clothing offered for sale. The Banque du Nord is a fine building, until you see the Palais de Justice, which is really the pride of Bethune. Behind it, alone in a field, stands the ruin of the previous structure.

We passed along a new road and over a new bridge across the canal and were in Essars, a scattered village. A demarcation stone is near there; then we

were by Le Touret Cemetery, which has a remarkable two-story front, and where the bugler sounds Last Post each evening.

Festubert, so well known to the First Division, is not much to visit now—a straggling small village, with a church the main feature and the usual French memorial. There were a great many children about, and the homes were poor, with many wooden after-the-war huts still in use. It is all a flat, muddy country with no break in the landscape, an uninspiring place. I had great difficulty in locating the old battle positions of May, '15; as no one seemed to know the road La Quinque Rue, I saw a ruined pillbox and enquired at the farmhouse near by. The old man came out and talked volubly, as he thought I was an agent sent to repair his plow, which had gone wrong.

After he understood me, however, I discovered I had just the guide needed. He was one of the very few originals of that part, and he told me that the younger generation did not know of La Quinque Rue, as the name was not used



Lens just after the war. Compare this view with the one below.



Today Lens is a city of fine residences and well-paved streets.

now. He took me to the place and showed me the very spot the Canadians occupied, now a muddy beetroot field. The road, or rue, is not much used and is a muddy track across back country. The farmhouse near the "Orchard" is rebuilt, but on a different site. The Orchard itself has been replanted on the same ground, all young trees tied to poles, the whole protected by a high wire fence. Standing there beside the old man, with a view of endless muddy fields and a few farmers at work with their carts, it was hard to realize that at that spot the Canadians had fought so desperately to gain small objectives.

The Third Brigade moved into reserve trenches at Festubert on the afternoon of May 18.

Two companies of the Royal Montreal Regiment and two companies of the Canadian Scottish were ordered to attack the La Quinque Rue, and another company of the Scottish was to attack the Orchard by way of an old German communication trench. The last named company reached its position, but the other companies had difficulty after they had advanced some five hundred yards. There was a decided lack of artillery support. On the morning of the 20th, orders were issued for an attack on the Orchard proper. The Canadian Scottish managed to occupy a deserted house close to the German line and there established a garrison of thirty men with two machine guns. At zero hour the Scottish attacked, assisted by a good barrage, but when they reached the edge of the Orchard they found themselves confronted by a deep ditch with a wired hedge beyond it. Plunging into the water-filled ditch without hesitation, they swarmed up and through the barrier on the other side with such determination that although the enemy outnumbered them two to one they fled. Three platoons captured the Orchard and a strong machine gun post, while another company pushed forward and occupied a German trench from which they could defeat any flanking counter attack. It was all over very quickly, and yet this was a position that had twice repulsed determined attacks. The 15th Battalion had attacked at the

same time a position on the right and had also been successful.

The 13th Royal Highlanders moved up and relieved the attacking forces, and consolidated the positions. This was no easy matter, as the enemy maintained a heavy rifle fire and shelled the approaches. The Canadian Engineers, under Lt.-Col. Wright, helped splendidly with the work, though Col. Wright was killed before daybreak. All day, May 21st, the Germans kept a heavy fire on the Orchard and in the afternoon they attempted a counter attack, which was easily repulsed. Then they hoisted a white flag and shouted in English: "We want to surrender. Come and take us." Some believed them and prepared to go over, but fire was opened on them and Sergeant Hillier was killed in trying to rescue them. The Highlanders opened fire at once and shot down the man who held the white flag. It was very hot the next day and the troops suffered from thirst, and were glad to be relieved at night by the 3rd Battalion. Meanwhile, the 8th and 10th Battalions had taken over another portion of the British line, and the 10th attacked a position known as "Bexhill." This assault failed on account of lack of proper bombardment, but on the 21st another effort was made by two companies of the 10th and one company of bombers from the First Brigade. On the left the assaulting waves were wiped out by machine gun fire, but on the right they reached the German trench and the bombers blasted the enemy from four hundred yards of its length. Then a barrier was built and defended despite numerous counter attacks. At dawn on the 22nd the Germans opened a tremendous bombardment of the captured trench and maintained it all day, practically erasing all signs of a trench. But the survivors clung desperately to what they could use as a defense and at night they were relieved by men from the First Brigade and Strathcona Horse. At eleven o'clock on the night of May 23rd, orders came for the 5th Battalion to attack the original "Bexhill" part, which had repulsed the first attack of the 10th. A ditch ten feet wide and water-filled had to be crossed, so the 7th

Battalion furnished a working party of one hundred men to place twelve bridges in position. They succeeded in doing so and severe fighting followed. The attack went over, but a company of the 7th had to be sent as reinforcements, as well as a squadron of Strathcona Horse, before "Bexhill" was compelled to yield. The casualties were heavy, but the ground was held all day, and the Canadian artillery assisted splendidly with very accurate fire. At night the Royal Canadian Dragoons and the 2nd Battalion took over the captured positions. On the night of May 23rd, the 3rd Battalion attacked a machine gun fortress known as "the Well," but were driven back with heavy losses. On the 26th Corporal Pym, of the R. C. D.'s, heard cries in No Man's Land. He and Sergeant Hollowell found a badly wounded man who had lain out there three days and nights. Hollowell was shot dead as they attempted a rescue, but Pym succeeded in getting the wounded man into the trench.

While looking over the Orchard and the surrounding area I remembered a very graphic description of the scene given by an ex-13th veteran, who is now a gardener in the Salient. He is a veteran of the South African war, and served between times as a Northwest Mounted Police. Joining the 13th, he was quickly made a sergeant, and was at Festubert in that capacity. During their first night of occupation he and a sentry observed two dark figures coming directly toward their post. Crouched low, they waited until the men were beside them, when they presented rifle muzzles. There was an instant surrender and they found they had bagged a German captain and his batman who had mistaken their way at the front trench. The captured officer had been a barber in New York City and could talk very good English. He was deeply incensed over such a ridiculous capture, and on the way back attempted a get-away but was killed, as well as his too-willing servant, before they got far.

PROGRESSING along that open flat country of continuous muddy fields, we reached Givenchy, passing only four houses on the way and the biggest goat I have ever seen. The church at Giv-

enchy is oddly placed at the triangle of roads, and on one corner there is a memorial to the West Lancashire Division. Back of it are a number of low mounds, the old redoubts that figured in the '15 fighting in which the Canadian First Division engaged. A number of wooden huts are still used as residences, and the women of Givenchy are evidently unused to visitors. They stood in groups and watched me prowl around the old position marked, "Duck's Bill" on the army map, and asked many questions when I invaded the only estaminet. A house near the memorial is a rather elaborate building, and an inscription on it states that it is in remembrance of the City of Liverpool; so I take it that Liverpool assisted in the rebuilding of Givenchy.

I heard strange stories in the estaminet. They told me that, after the war, the War Graves people were searching for bodies near the church when a fine limousine drove up and a German officer got out. He went to the man in charge and told him that he had hurriedly buried a considerable number of bodies in a circular trench, and offered to locate it. His offer was gladly accepted, and ninety bodies were recovered from the trench. While the digging was in progress, a number of civilians were found. They had been killed by shell fire and all placed in one huge grave.

GOING over the canal into Cuinchy, the "war" bridge is still used. The French began to build one soon after the war, but funds were exhausted before the approaches were completed, and it has remained in that state ever since. Efforts are now being made to have the job finished this winter and thus furnish employment in that district.

A short visit to La Bassée was next on the programme. It is a progressive-looking place, with many fine buildings and a huge modern plant dealing with extracts from coal. Returning, we passed through Auchy des Mines, then came to the mine craters of Hulloch, very rough ground, apparently untouched since the war. Old barbed wire and wire stakes lay around with other debris.

I journeyed on to Loos. It was a sickening place when last I saw it, an indescrib-

able welter of ruin, but now it has been largely restored. The mines are working once more and the houses are rebuilt, the square looking quite modern with the regular French memorial in place. New fences are around, and many white walls, neat tenements, gardens even, and playing children. Yet something of the old Loos lingers. It is indefinable but it is there. Look at the great slag heaps, the embankment, the corrugated iron so freely in use, the goats in the barren spaces, and you feel all you sense as you clamber up the chalky slopes above into the old craters, a scene of desolation. Those gaping chalk sores remain, great pits and clefts and gullies, scattered with debris, tufted with dwarf bushes and weeds, discolored, dreadful, with cheap black-papered huts on the roadside and all waste in the rear. I wandered about it and felt as if I were back in '18 when last I saw it; and when I looked back my last view was of a scraggly goat silhouetted on the skyline, and he seemed typical of Loos.

LENS was a sharp contrast. It is the cleanest place in all that mining area, very modern even to a last-minute filling station, and its mine offices would be a credit to any American city. Its streets are very clean and wide and well-paved, its homes have fronts separating them from the street, often with trees or shrubs planted tastefully, and its buffet affords the finest meal one can get in all the region.

I wandered over to Cité du Moulin, a section of long tenement houses, of spacious yards without a blade of grass to be seen, with a church, and a large square, and more grounds evenly levelled, raked, clean but barren of any growth. From a far corner one could see a few poor huts in the rear, and from one a woman came, a consumptive-looking, furtive creature, munching a crust of bread, wolfing it as she hurried along, the first weird human I had seen in France.

Going down a quiet Lens street, I tried to locate the exact spot which the 21st Battalion had held on the March 4, when the Germans tried to raid them on a large scale. After the heaviest bar-

rage of the winter and accompanied by liquid fire, four parties of forty men each, selected from a special storm-troop battalion, charged the Canadian line. Seventy-five reached the trench but were ejected and three wounded taken prisoners. This was on the left flank, where the liquid fire was used. Elsewhere, fifty-five of these invaders were shot down.

Going to the railway embankment, I found another interesting spot but now minus the least trace of war. When that ground was No Man's Land a broad open sewer, ten feet deep and twenty feet wide, passed across the land between the opposing lines and through a brick culvert in the embankment. On February 14th, 1918, the 46th Battalion staged a raid there. Two parties advanced under a barrage. The right party was held back for a time by our Stokes falling short, but they managed to nab one prisoner from his post near the culvert. The left party encountered machine-gun fire from a strong point fifty yards behind the bank. Sergeant Bourton led his squad around until they got back of the position and found it a concrete gun emplacement. They rushed the post and captured the three gunners in action. Two of them attempted to escape up the embankment but ran into the arms of a squad posted there. All prisoners belonged to the 2nd Battalion, First Guard Reserve Regiment. Two machine guns were taken, one being a Lewis gun converted to fire German ammunition.

Immediately south of Lens were the Lens-Arras Road craters, now only a series of gardens of whitish soil which seems strangely fertile. A savage dog forbade my entry into a small field that seemed to have depressions caused by shells.

Dusk had fallen as I wandered about, and all Lens was soon aglow with lights. An old Frenchman regarded me curiously and suggested that it was no place for "sleep-walkers." I joked with him, and shortly he was confiding that he himself could not sleep as he had high hopes of winning big money in the Irish Sweepstakes. He had a ticket and had but lately discovered the magic of it.



La Bassée just after the war.



La Bassée as it is today.

Its numbers, added, totalled his age exactly, and what surer omen could a man wish?

He invited me to see his home, and it appeared to be a neat brick house. Going inside, I found that it was built on very substantial concrete, a German gun emplacement covering exactly his old cellar. No rancor was in his talk as he told me of all that had been done to the Lens mines by the enemy before quitting them, and he was not in the least a soured man. His daughters gave me coffee and we sat around chatting like old friends. It was a striking contrast to the atmosphere of the Salient, a change that warmed me to France. They spun countless stories of how they had found things when they returned to Lens, of all the bombs and shells left in the cellars, and then switched to jovial accounts of their football team.

All those mining towns have their football teams. The Frenchman, since the war, has learned the game, has developed it, until it is safe to say that within ten years Great Britain will be sorely taxed to uphold her supremacy in the pastime. Lens has an entry in the league, and, in keeping with other teams of like calibre, imports one or two expert English players in order to keep up the morale of the local talent. The man who had been there the previous summer is now one of England's stars. He was paid a good salary and all expenses, and Lens was quite satisfied. Immense crowds attend their games. And they all buy tickets for the club pool on goals scored. Each game sees winnings of 5,000 or 6,000 francs distributed among the holders of the winning tickets, according to the basis agreed upon by the promoters.

They told me a strange story of an English deserter. He left his battalion near Loos and hid some place back of the mining area until he induced refugees from Lens to adopt him. By sheer luck he was never detected, and when they returned to Lens he came with them and worked there in the mines. He was with them from 1917 until last year, and in all that time he never saw a member of his battalion or a single old comrade or had a letter from home. In an Eng-

lish paper he saw his name included among the missing from his home town, and decided that his desertion had not been marked as such, and took the chance of going back. He managed to get across the Channel by joining weekend travellers and saying he had lost his ticket. The odd thing about it all is that he never sent word back to Lens, nor has he returned.

After a most pleasant evening I was whirled through the night over Vimy slopes again, past Thelus crossroads and into the District of Arras.

THE last time I was in Arras the place was like a haunted house. It was night, and every footfall seemed to re-echo in a weird manner. No lights showed anywhere. Buildings with the roof gone, gaunt ribs without tiles, homes with great gaps in the wall, with windowless holes like black eye sockets, leered over the streets. The rattle of an ammunition wagon on a far street was alarming, and all the time you expected to hear the scream of a big shell, its slamming explosion, and a fresh fall of brick. As you went along the narrow side streets a dark figure would often emerge, a withered crone or an old Frenchman, and scuttle with a click-clack of sabots to another doorway, to vanish there as suddenly as they had appeared. People lived in cellars, away down in the bowels of Arras, and in her caves were many troops.

Now all is changed. We came into a glare of lights, brilliant shop windows and street lamps, with traffic cops at the corners, and red "Halte" signs. The displays in some windows would do credit to many of our cities, and goods were not low-priced. Toys and Christmas gifts predominated, and many of the former were priced from two to three dollars. Arras is not poor.

At night one could not see a trace of war damage. The station is rebuilt in the grand manner, and in front of it are the headquarters of the War Graves Commission, a fine modern brick building. It is flanked by up-to-date hotels and restaurants.

I put up at the Hotel de Strasbourg on the Boulevard de Strasbourg, a rather

small place when compared to some of the others but with a reputation for good cooking that fills its dining room at every meal hour. And scarcely a day passes but many of its clients are Englishmen who have known it a long time. In the morning I set out to see the city.

Arras is an important place and feels that it is. You notice it whenever you meet any of the officials, and they soon inform you that it is the capital of Pas de Calais, and that it is an old Gallo-Roman city which was in existence long before Christianity was born.

In the rue Pasteur and along the Grande Place and Petite Place there are houses with cellars reaching down three and four flights, cellars beneath cellars, dank, dark undergrounds that whisper of the dark ages. It gives one queer thrills to go away down in those passages, and I readily believed many of the stories told about them, of the finding of skeletons there, of unwanted members of a family chained there for years. All the city seems undermined, and parts of it are settling. The great caves have tunnels reaching in all directions, to Mont St. Eloi, to Tilloy, to Neuville St. Vaast. Ordinarily visitors are not allowed down them now, and a short inspection was enough for me. In keeping with many of their ideas of sanitation, the city workers are taking the refuse and filth just outside the city and pouring it down an entrance to the caves. It will be a strange thing if within ten years there is not an outbreak of some fever in Arras.

Here and there one can see wounds on the old buildings where shrapnel struck, and new bricks fitted into old walls are easily discerned. Very few ruins remain. The City Hall, such a noted ruin in war time, is now almost

ready for its official opening, a fine building costing forty million francs, an exact replica of the original. The cathedral is taking longer. Workers are busy about it and slowly it is assuming its former beauty, but it will be two years before it is finished.

The Eglise Saint Jean-Baptiste was opened in 1929, and is in its former style. This was the only church to survive the Revolution, and it was used then as a temple to Goddess Reason. The French Government gave the moneys needed to restore the gabled and arcaded houses of the Grande and Petite Places, but they stipulated they were to be restored in their original Flemish style. For the rest of the city, Newcastle, England, and Senegal gave great assistance.

Going down the rue d'Amiens I found the Arras British Cemetery. It is having a wonderful front erected, arches, walls and columns that must cost much money. Near at hand are the old barracks where we stayed in '18, and I looked to find my name on the wall, but it had been erased as well as all the others that were inscribed there. Farther on is a monument to the man who introduced the sugar beet to Northern France. In the Chapel Nôtre Dame des Ardents there is a plate bearing an inscription, a memorial to the Canadian officers and men who fell in the Great War.

It is a quaint city. Its old-fashioned, narrow streets, twisted, and with house drains and dirty gutters, are offensive at first glance; then one feels the lure of the whole surroundings, the age, the mystery, the unknown history of those dark ways. An impressionable person will never forget Arras.



Trenches at Vimy preserved just as they were during the war.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROAD TO VIMY

LEAVING Arras via Ste. Catherine, I passed the concrete shell of a flour mill that was designed as a modern affair to be operated by electricity. It is situated beside the River Scarpe, and after a disastrous fire has never been repaired. A little farther on, across the road from it, the French are building a windmill. Going up the steep hill, passing a lone Nissen hut on the right, you have a view of the wide fields beyond, the landmarks you remember.

Old cellars are visible among the grass along the way, and after a time you can see old trenches on the right. Roclincourt is in the hollow on the right, a new brick village with a very conspicuous church. Ecurie is on the left, and looks quite imposing on the high ground. It is difficult to realize that you are back on the battlefields. There are no signs of trenches in the village.

After passing Arras Road Cemetery, you can see two of the nine elms which give the next cemetery its name, along with the stubs of the destroyed trees.

The caretaker maintained, however, that they were not elms at all. The Nine Elms Cemetery is in a hollow.

All along the road the fields are muddy after having yielded their crop of beets, and in them on the left I saw many men wandering in an aimless manner. Watching, I saw that each had a long iron bar which he carefully thrust down at different spots. Three of them had laid their bars down and were digging. I went over and found that they were mostly Poles, engaged by the French Government to make a final search of the war zone. They get paid so much for each body they find, and so are very careful in their work. One put his bar down and grunted with satisfaction. He dug carefully, going down less than three feet before he uncovered two bodies, badly decomposed. One was a German, the other a poilu. They were close together, had been buried in the same shell hole, and the German still wore his equipment. It was interesting to see how eagerly the Pole searched their clothing for money, and his abso-

lute indifference to such a job. No wonder the French do not care to do it themselves. It is a horrible task. The Poles told me they had found as many as 300 bodies in a week.

Les Tilleuls Crossroads. How many Canadians must remember the traffic man in his refuge there in front of the Memorial to Canadian artillerymen. There are no traces of sandbags now, and the memorial has neat surroundings. Going over into Thelus, I looked in vain for signs of war.

Farbus and Willerval looked like progressive towns in the distance, but I went back to the main road and over to Zivy Crater—a unique memorial, walled like a cup with a cross on the bottom. The rim is beautiful, with a fine hedge encircling all, and on the stone are the names of forty-eight men of the 2nd Canadian Division.

The gardener showed me the old trenches and barbed wire just outside the crater, and stated that there the Poles had found sixty bodies in one field. One hundred yards away there was a shaftlike opening that seemed to go away down to a tunnel, and the gardener said there were three such places in the vicinity and he had been told that they led back to Arras. The German trenches were mostly erased. Litchfield Crater is another such memorial; and then, looking over the open, one glimpses the first stretch of war ground, land left as it was in '18.

I went on into Neuville St. Vaast, which was rather dirty-looking in the damp mist that had risen. The church seemed the main feature of the place. Beer signs were plentiful, and long-haired dogs slunk about. Altogether, the village was not inviting. But it is far better than when we saw it in war-time—a ghoulish underground, with dead buried in all directions, a welter of ruins, rat-ridden, clammy, foul, with here and there a decent dugout. In 1918 all that was left of the village above ground was a pile of stones that had been the church.

GOING back to the Arras-Lens Road, I continued on to the long, tree-lined road that leads to Vimy Memorial. It is far beyond our old front line, almost

over the Ridge, and in between it and Litchfield Crater the war ground begins. A man stood at the memorial entrance, looking at an old war map that had lists of familiar trench names beginning with A and B, such as Amber, Armor, Anniversary, Anchor, and Bees, Bull, and so on. He said that the 2nd Division captured sixty German prisoners in one dugout at Thelus, and that the name, Les Tilleuls, was derived from two American basswood trees that had stood on the corner. He said that on the corner to the left of the memorial, in a house cellar, the War Graves people had found fifty dead Germans, and that the Canadian colonel who had caused them to be stowed there had visited France and told about doing it.

The road on Vimy is lined with maples, but they are mostly Norway maples from Holland, though some Canadian ones have been planted, too. Two hundred yards in, you cross the old German third line, and then there is another deep trench running over the ridge toward Vimy town.

At La Folie Farm there is a maze of shell craters, and barbed wire is strewn around. La Folie Wood is new grown and quite dense, with a few old stubs in it. One holds an unexploded shell, and there is a stone-walled well in a thick bunch of bushes. Among the trees one starts countless rabbits, and trips continually on old wire and debris. The place has never been thoroughly searched, yet much German booty was found there years after the war. Looking over the dugouts still visible, I wondered how we could possibly have overlooked all the things that have been found since.

Passing some pillbox ruins and the position of a German whizzbang battery—just 400 yards from our old front line—I went on to the famous concrete trenches and dugouts, after first looking at the cross erected in memory of the dead of the 3rd Division.

At the trenches I was thrilled beyond words. It was stunning, unreal. There I was, with scarcely an effort, back in the old line during that winter of 1916-17. There are the saps and posts, the trenches we used, exact in all detail;



Arras City Hall and Square in 1918.

the craters wired as they were, and German posts on the other side. Never had I dreamed that the restored trenches were the actual ones that we of the 7th Brigade knew so well. After looking them over I was allowed in the "sacred zone," to explore all that area.

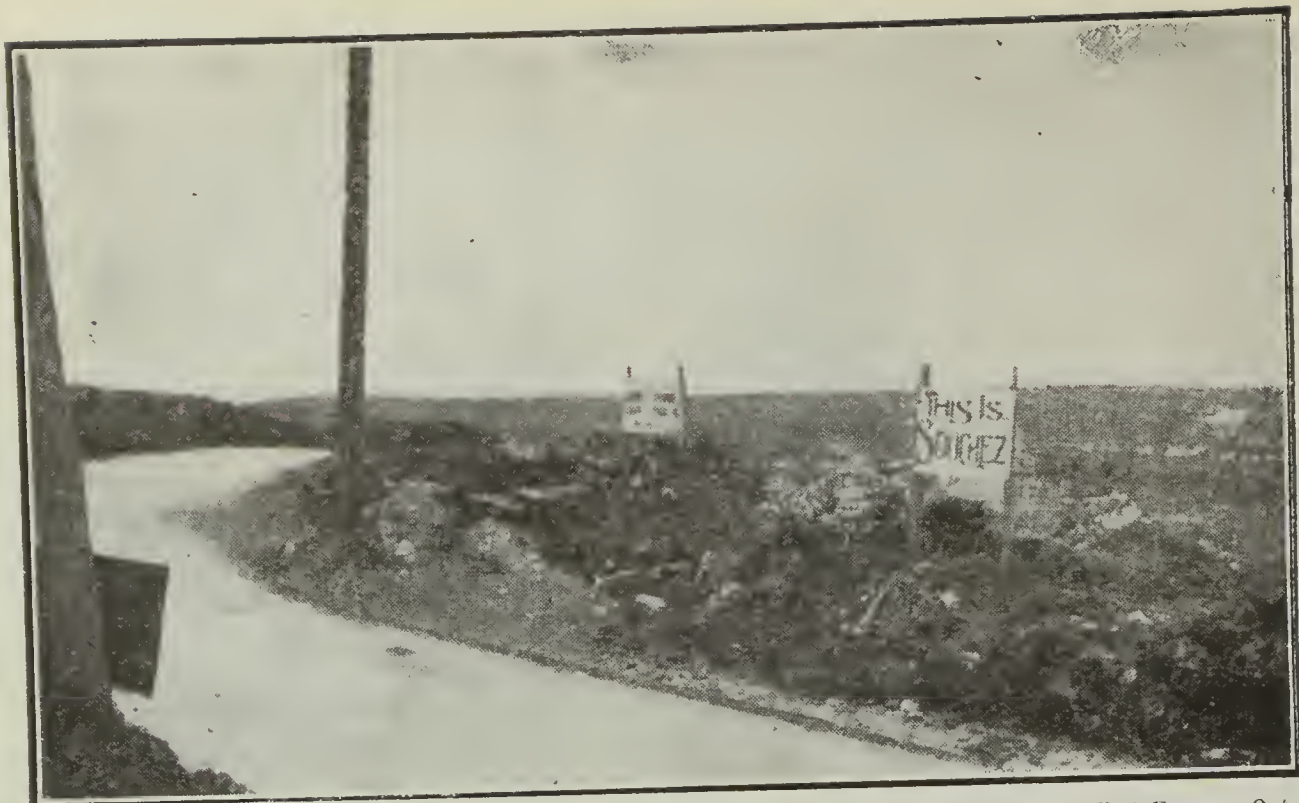
It is wonderful, marvellous. Visitors have been confined to the paths leading to the concrete trenches. Day and night, month in and month out, a guard is there, with gun and dog, to protect that zone of a few miles, for there are vandals who would steal the very headstones from the graves in order to say they had a souvenir of Vimy.

Everything is untouched. You walk among the high weeds and grass and find all the old trenches, and it is easy to follow our old front line all the way from the "Twins" and "Ross Street" to the flanks of the 4th Division front. Old wire and rivetting and rotting duck-walks are there, and in the craters you can find all sorts of things. I went down into Albany and found stick bombs

galore, Stokes, steel helmets, Mills rifle grenades, a "toffee apple," the handle of a stretcher. Going along the craters, I remembered an old sniping post near the Birkin group and probed around there. Within fifteen minutes I had uncovered the big steel plate, still in position.

There is a wonderful guide at the trenches—Gunner George H. Stubbs, who has been at Vimy since 1921. It is he who is largely responsible for Grange Tunnel being restored, as he found the old entrance and explored it. He has also located many other dugouts, has found all the material on display at the museum, and can tell you many strange tales of his findings over the Ridge.

There is no trouble in following the entire crater line. Only one has been levelled in all the lot, and that was done as the road to the memorial was constructed. You can go along all the old trenches and easily trace your way back to the Quarry line and the dugouts there. It is quite easy to go down into several



—Photo by Colin Russel, Fort Frances, Ont.

Souchez in wartime.



A present-day view of Souchez.

of them; and quite dangerous, for the French, gathering wood, have thoughtlessly taken out the braces at the entrance and are working inward instead of taking out the timbers at the bottom.

They are all smelly, horrible places, and absolutely impassable now. Good man, Chassery, Devon Crater, Vernon, Grange, Duffield, Durand, Common Patricia, Longfellow, Broadmarsh, Lalsalle—all those old names surge back as you tramp along the old ways, and it is easy to picture again the file of dark figures going in to take over the posts for night duty. How we stamped along those frozen duckwalks, swathed in greatcoats, jerkins, crowned with Balaclava caps under the steel bouncers, old socks in lieu of mittens, rifles bandaged in sandbags. Standing there on post, you could hear Fritz coughing and pounding his arms and chest to get warm; and who can forget the streak of sparks into the night, the dazzling whiteness of the flares? I tried to find the entrance to the old dugout near the Patricia post, but could not.

The entrance to Grange tunnel has souvenirs embedded in the concrete—bombs and shells and bayonets. They had to be so fixed, as visitors would steal anything left loose. The stairway goes down thirty-eight feet, then you turn right. An old sign at a branch to the left says "Forward To P Line." At the right another reads, "Exit To P 76." You go on past two rooms and begin to see names on the walls. "Pte. H. D. MacRae, 52nd Batt. From 119th, Massey, Algoma," was the first one I saw. An old air pipe is underfoot, and mess tins, bully tins. There are spots blackened by candles set on the ledges, and protruding parts rubbed smooth by passing soldiers. "R. I. P. In Memory of the R. C. Rs. who fell at Vimy," is next "E. B. Eaves" is the name beside it. Another room has a soldier's face carved on the wall, a very artistic effort.

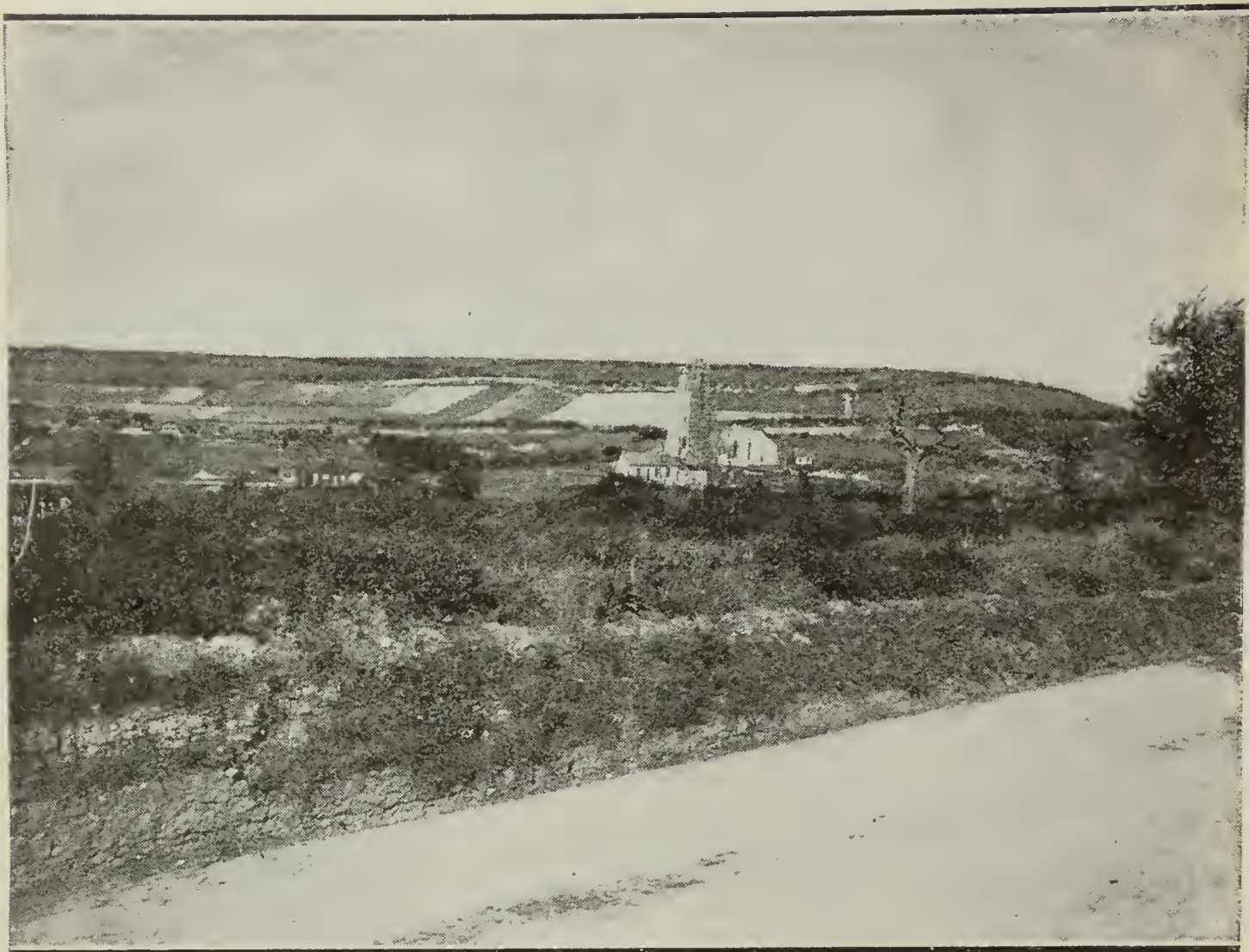
You now reach forked ways; tunnels right, centre and left. Original signs are still there. "To Rear. To Front. 42nd B. H. Q." On the wall are the names of two American deserters who joined up with the Canadians. The passage to the left leads to battalion headquarters,

and in it the old bunks still sag, the washstand and basin still survive, and a rum jar is in the corner. On the wall you read, "Major Colter, Lt. Abbott, Lt. Jamieson, Lt. J. T. Kay, 52nd Battalion." You wander on to a messroom, to the brigade office, which is reached by the centre passage, and then go back to the museum.

It contains a most interesting collection that Stubbs has gathered—German gas alarm bells, a German drum found near La Folie Farm, a foil and mask found in a German dugout near the Wood, gas masks, helmets, mess tins, rifles, haversacks, Very lights, pistols, German trench signs, a fixed rifle they had set near Broadmarsh, a G phone for listening underground, trench knives, gun cotton, bottles with candles in them, just as when they were found. All the collection is protected by a wire netting as this is the only way in which the relics could be retained. Guides go around with visitors, and there are thousands and thousands of them. On wet, chilly November days I have seen five and six carloads at a time, many of them women, swarming down the wet trenches, going down into the tunnels. Vimy is the greatest showplace on the Western Front. There is nothing else like it in the world.

The tunnel branches again, a passage leading to Neuville St. Vaast, and one goes left twenty-five yards to a communication trench. At the slope a shell is still in position as it was found. It had come through from the bottom of a shell crater until it protruded into the tunnel, but it did not explode. The charge has been removed and the shell replaced in its old position. More names decorate the walls:

"J. L. Snyder, 49th Batt. E. A. Jones, Woodstock, N.B., R.C.R. Hello, Canada. Hello, East Yorks. Good-by Canada. What about the City of Smoke, good old Manchester?" There is a carved kiltie in good shape, and a memorial plate in honor of the dead of the 42nd R.H.C. More names. Roy Harper, 60th Battalion. J. Nicholls, 1st C.M.R., R. D. Taylor, P.P.C.L.I., then a lengthy inscription well carved: "In Memory of Private Whitehead, 42nd



Looking toward Notre Dame de Lorette from Souchez.

R.H.C., who fell at Vimy. One of the U. S. gallant boys who died for Canada. A. G. Gordon, 52nd Batt., Prince Albert, Sask."

Another old sign has many messages. "To Zouave Valley Dressing Station; To Bde. Hdqtrs., To Batt. H. Q., Old Boot Street." At right a passage leads away down to a mine shaft that was to go under the German trench. You may go down if you wish. On the left a tunnel leads to Souchez.

At the walls near this junction there are some splendid examples of carving. A badge of the R. C. R. is the best of the lot, the "V. R. I." being exquisite. There is a memorial to the Princess Pats, and another in memory of the 2nd C. M. R. "A. A. Parks, Saint John. N.B., May 9, 1917. James Burton, R.C.R. Still alive and kicking. J. Auchincloss. Untouched by whizzbangs as yet. W. E. Ashley, 222nd Batt. C. Robinson, D.C.M. fool. Killarney, Manitoba." The R. C. R. badge is by R. L. Jollymore. Strangely, as they cleaned the saps at

the opening to Grange Tunnel, they found a body under the debris. It was easily identified by means of a pocket-book and metal discs, and was that of James Burton who had been "alive and kicking." There is a cookhouse next along the tunnel, and the company headquarters used by some battalion during the Vimy attack. In it are shells, rifles, helmets and Lewis guns found on the Ridge. In the chalk corner is carved a German Iron Cross. The exit is at Duffield and Grange Craters, and Stokes and an armor-piercing shell are embedded at the entrance. Near by is the wreckage of an airplane that crashed at Hill 140.

I crossed over to the German line. Their trenches are outlined and restored, just as the Canadian line has been. As you reach their underground entrance, a German stretcher is against the trench side in a most realistic manner. A large soup carrier is there, too. Inside, over the doorway, is a swallow's nest. Last summer, when there were

often 10,000 visitors at Vimy in a single day, the swallow had her young there and raised them without trouble. When the entrance was cleared, a dead German was found at the doorway and a Canadian soldier in the trench. The biggest mystery was in the crater, where Stubbs discovered a private of the 1st Cheshires. Among the souvenirs embedded in the concrete beside the stairs is a "whiffer," a businesslike blackjack that some Otto had ready for Canadian visitors. Down a few steps, you meet the Kaiser. He is there as large as life, encased in German armor used for their machine gunners — a most remarkable figure.

The German shaft goes down for nearly 150 feet, leading by two stairways. Three shafts lead from it to counter mines which the enemy was placing. An air pipe is still in place, the maker's name visible—Banneberg und Quandt, Berlin. A German Iron Cross is carved on the side of the second stairway, and a horseshoe contains a likeness of the Kaiser, with a star over his head. After coming up to the trench again I wandered around to the German machine-gun posts, built of concrete, snugly hidden, and to a "minnie gun" emplacement, with quarters for the crew near by. Looking back into the German lines, one can see the battered ruin of a limber and jumbled wire.

Far over, through the mist, is the church steeple, a water tower, and a windmill of Neuville St. Vaast. I could not see Mont St. Eloi, so thick was the fog, or Berthonaval Wood. All the "sacred zone" of Vimy is planted with Douglas fir, and the guards have the greatest difficulty in preventing the small trees from being stolen. There are sometimes ten thefts in a single day, so crazed are visitors for "something from Vimy." They are warned on all sides, but take no heed. If they were loosed into the area there would be countless accidents, as live bombs, shells, etc., are everywhere. Each day, too, in the farm districts, you see the French digging shells from their fields. Year by year the soil settles or the metal works upward, for always they are finding things which the plow did not touch

the previous year. Recently, in Lens, a child found a detonator in an old cellar, played with it, and had its fingers blown off.

Stubbs and I walked all along the front, keeping to the Canadian line. The memorial is over on German ground and could be visited afterward. We could find no trace of Sapper Trench as a beginning, or the Paris Craters. But the 13th R. H. C. would remember them as the enemy attempted to raid them at the point, a party of twelve approaching a sap running into Number 4 Crater. Lieut. Christie was in command at that spot and he set up a Lewis gun and scattered the raiders. One of them went down and a number of stick bombs were left behind. One of the 13th men was killed.

The La Folie sector was never a "rest" cure. It was there that on December 6th, '16, a wounded German was found in the wire at dawn, shot through the head. How he came there, no one knew. He was sent down to headquarters, and a sharp watch was kept the following night. Again on a post there, on the 12th of January, '17, a party of German raiders leaped in on two sentries of the 2nd Division. One man threw up his hands but his partner was more plucky. He downed the German who had seized him, and got clear though he was shot at by the other raiders. He reached a bomb post but dare not throw Mills grenades for fear of killing his chum. Two of the Germans dragged their prisoner over the bags, and the escaped man shot at them. The three other Germans, who had acted as a covering party, then tried to get away safely but the plucky one shot one of them down. Help had arrived in the meantime and the plucky man walked toward Montreal Crater so quickly that they were able to capture one of the enemy who had taken temporary shelter in an old sap. So it ended in a fifty-fifty game.

On January 15th, a 28th Battalion sentry on duty at Spinner and Cooker Alley recaptured three Germans who had escaped from the cage at Bruay and were so near getting back to their lines. Every yard of Vimy has thrilling history. For instance, on the 6th of April,

at eleven-thirty in the morning, a German was seen walking towards Montreal Crater. The 38th Battalion was in the line. When the sentries first saw him he was on the west side of Clutch and Cyrus trenches and he eventually walked right in via the sap. He was carrying his pack and rifle, and was a man of small stature, with fair complexion. He belonged to the 11th Bavarians, and though his clothing was muddy it was in good condition. It was amazing that he should be permitted to walk over to our trenches in broad daylight.

At different points the Germans blundered into our lines. On December 19th, '16, on the front of the 13th Battalion, a flare revealed two skulkers in the Canadian wire. They were challenged by men in the crater post, and replied in German. The sentries at once opened fire, wounding one man. The other ran—into the sap, and was captured. The wounded man called out his desire to surrender so the corporal in charge brought him in, and both were sent to headquarters. They belonged to the 17th Bavarian Landwehr, and had come into the line the previous night.

As we pushed over on the 4th Division front, the ground became much rougher and the shell craters seemed deeper. There is also an abundance of small growth in that territory, many rabbits, and at least one hundred crows. Grenadier Crater seems as it was in 1917. We looked down at Givenchy-en-Gohelle—straggled homes in a hollow. A small wood is directly behind the little village and Stubbs, prowling there last year found a copy of the Montreal Star still in readable condition and containing a long list of the wounded during the Vimy assault. The paper had been carefully folded and tucked into a hiding place.

We walked along the old artillery road used after the Ridge was taken, and the German C. T. back of the Pimple is still traceable. The Sand Pits were alive with rabbits, and numerous signs were posted forbidding anyone to shoot them. I went to the ruin of the 44th Battalion Memorial. The plate has been taken back to Canada and only the frame of the monument remains. From the

Pimple one has a fine view over Souchez Valley, and Bovigny Wood looked very green across the hollow. The 2nd Division artillery had guns in that wood on Christmas night, 1916, and could see their shells exploding on the Pimple.

WE WENT down the slope, overlooking all the ground below and Zouave Valley on the left.

Stopping beside a chalk pit in the side of the hill, I saw a grave in its depths and went down. The cross was erected in memory of a French corporal killed on September 28th, 1915. I looked about. It was a fearsome place. A number of human bones were scattered over the cavity, and live bombs and shells were plentiful. Bully tins, full, and mess tins and old helmets were battered and rusted. An old road runs up the side of the ridge and there were many trench markings. At the valley edge old dugout entrances are still visible, and concrete targets used by artillery and machine gunners are still in place, one still intact. Zouave Valley Cemetery is crowded with Canadian dead.

Souchez is a typical new French town. Its rebuilding was made possible by Kensington, London, England, and the Grande Place is named Kensington Square. The mairie is very modern and sports the town clock. Gardens of purple cabbage and dogs seemed to dominate. Geese were playing in the puddles, and the inevitable corrugated iron was in place behind each house. A flaring gasoline sign contrasted with an ancient cart standing beside it. A waterfall bubbled prettily near some newer houses, and one of the residents informed me that a syndicate had been formed with outside capital to bottle the water that was to be a rival to Vichy and Perrier.

The church is a spick and span, white-trimmed building, and the Café de la Mairie a most hospitable inn. It was there that I was shown, through the window, a man who was insane until a shell exploded just outside his kitchen, knocking him across the room and almost killing him. But he recovered his sanity and seems perfectly normal. A hot debate on that point followed, as he has

married a woman fifteen years older than himself, and that, the majority insisted, was a sign of mental weakness.

The Poles, digging around Souchez, have found over 200 bodies. I asked about the old tunnel entrances there, but no one knew their location. It is estimated that there are twenty-two miles of tunnels under Vimy, and in most places the passages are not blocked. In Grange alone one can go for two miles. The dead about Souchez will never be recovered more than fifty per cent.

They told me at the Café of a Souchez man whose wife had been captured and taken to Lens. He was in the trenches at Souchez and wanted very much to see her. It was in winter and the front was quiet and on a dark night he slipped through the lines and reached the house where she was staying. Peering in the window, he saw her seated on a German's knee in a loving attitude, so he came back without making himself known. I have read a similar tale in *Under Fire*, but did not dispute the story.

We went up into Carency, another new place that shouts of new paint and new brick. They were paving the street and the place seemed very busy. No trace was there of the old horse lines and huts we knew in wartime. The station is quite natty, and the church is perched like a watchman on a tower on a slope above the main street.

Carency is peopled largely by folks who did not reside there before the war. They are not interested in anything that happened to that sector in wartime, and their talk is all about the situation of the town. It is a pretty location on the hillside, and there are certainly many modern features about it. The place has been rebuilt by government money. The people seemingly could not have afforded to do so themselves. I saw no signs of poverty.

LEAVING Carency, I went on to Ablain Saint Nazaire. Every Canadian who was at Vimy must recall the old church there. Its remnant of tower and body of arches was the landmark of that area, and it stands there the same

today as in wartime. It does not seem to have lost another stone or to have had a person near it since 1918. The village is but a straggling line of houses and seems sleeping or dead, discouraged. There are no signs of any effort at making the homes attractive, and the great ridge of Notre Dame de Lorette seems to hide it from the rest of the world.

Canadians will remember that famed hill. I went there in wartime and saw things that made my flesh crawl. It was the same with all who happened there. Hardened as one was to the sights of the battlefield there was something appalling about that hill that made one shiver. There were trenches everywhere, gouging the slopes, a medley of unsightly ditches, the whole littered with debris of every nature. Equipment, broken rifles, rusting bayonets, hundreds of bombs, were scattered over every few yards, and never have I seen so many grinning skulls. They were in the tangled masses of barbed wire, in bombing saps, in puddles of filth, and here and there were rotted uniforms, both blue and field grey, holding more bones together. No one will ever know how many soldiers died on that hill, but their numbers run into tens of thousands.

Now all is changed, but the dead remain. Notre Dame de Lorette is now a huge shrine and cemetery combined. Eighteen thousand graves of known dead are in that two-acre lot, and in the centre is a pyramidal tower, built on a huge square concrete platform and faced with white stone. A staircase of 200 steps, with five platforms on the way, enables one to reach the top, where there is a lighthouse. The light has a power of 30,000 watts, and a mobile projector turns the cone of beams at the rate of five turns to the minute in a ray of seventy kilometers. Going along the Arras-Bethune road at night, that circling light above you gives one thrills he will not experience elsewhere, for in that hollow between Lorette and Vimy some peculiarity of the contour of the hills deadens all sound. You seem, at night, to be passing through a forbidden land, a desolate area, a place where no



The new railway station at Arras.

man may speak aloud, and the light as it swings seems to have almost a whispering voice. In the far distance the memorial is a beautiful thing at night. You see only the tall white column as if it were suspended there, and the long pale fingers of light are like the beacons of remembrance. Under the tower a wide entrance leads into the ossuary. Four-storied groups of eight coffins in oak, tinted in ebony, form the crypt, covering the twenty-five vaults below. Down in that vast chamber there are the remains of 30,000 unknown dead.

About seventy-five yards from the light tower stands the Basilic, built in Roman Byzantine style, with an exterior altar, a fine example of architecture in perfect harmony with the tower. The interior is decorated with marble memorial slabs, and the windows are beautiful beyond words. I saw that one had been presented by Mrs. Stanley Baldwin.

From the hill one seems to look directly down at the roofs of two almshouses, serving Souchez, donated by the British.

We went back to the main road, with Givenchy Wood on our right. On our left was "King George's Road," a road to Lorette which was opened by King George on May 12, 1922. A large sign extols the fact, notwithstanding that the road has degenerated into a path hardly

fit for carts and rarely used. We passed a machine gun post in the wood—crumbling concrete, partly bush covered, beside a road leading to Bully Grenay. There were many houses along the way, but few people stirring.

We passed a huge mine and slag heaps, then a series of better looking homes, one of which was completely covered by vines, like an English cottage. Many had fences in front and hedges. It seemed incredible that we were approaching that old mining town, Noeux-les-Mines.

Once in the town, I quickly found old billets we had occupied. The woman in charge was not the one we had known, however. She was extremely kind-hearted and, as we had quarters over her estaminet, arranged that we could go downstairs and into a back room without being seen by passers-by. There we could have all the refreshments we desired at any time.

The buildings along the street contrasted vividly. The old ones were dark and smoky and the new ones still a fiery red. Many were both, having had new tops built in the surviving walls. The huge slag heap behind our old home is covered with green, and seems not to have had another truckload dumped on it. I passed through a curving back alley where I remember seeing some of our lads stealing cabbage from a garden.

THE "Three Cats" estaminet, as we called it, the little one on the left-hand side of the street with the picture of Napoleon on the wall, is unchanged. Napoleon has seven more fly specks on his right cheek and a large one on his first medal, but otherwise looks healthy. Madame slops beer on the counter just as she used to do, and never gives the right change to a stranger, just as she used to do. Seated there, I had but to shut my eyes to hear again the voices of Sambro Brown and Larry Kennedy ordering uncore demi; and then, in fancy, to see the old lads seated there, arguing about what Napoleon would have done in the Great War, and to see Sambro push back after his second vin blanc and sing his coon song about the colored lady who could not understand the different shades of her offspring.

"Some were black, and some were blacker,
Some were black as a chaw terbacker.
But one was pale, and another part.."

Women and girls were sluicing doorways, scrubbing with much water at various shop fronts. Big carts lumbered by with loads of coal in sacks, and there were many small donkeys hitched to enormous carts. Only one or two ruins are left unhidden, and the town is not nearly as dirty as it used to be in wartime. It got dark very early, and as the lamps were lighted the place seemed to come to life. Many miners passed along the

streets, and all at once the estaminets had many customers. Selecting a large one in the middle of the main street, we went in.

It was easy to get into conversation with some of the men, and soon they were regaling us with their own experiences at different parts of the front. One chap told of seeing a Turco who had as his chief possession a string of twenty-two German ears. Another lad claimed to have been bayoneted seven times in a trench attack and to have lain four hours under the feet of the German garrison before another surge of battle cleared the line and he could get attention. Jumping to his feet, he undid jacket and shirt and showed us the red scars on his body.

Another chap, a brawny fellow with a huge mustache, got greatly interested and all at once rushed out as if he were a fireman. Shortly he returned with a photograph and badges. It was the picture of a Canadian sergeant-major, a very gallant soldier, his belt blancoed nicely, his swagger stick at the correct angle. The badges were ones he had worn.

"He," said the Frenchman, "made love to my sister and never came back. Did you know him?"

I declared honestly that I did not.

The fellow subsided and offered us a drink. "C'est la guerre," he grunted. If that particular sergeant-major reads this he should be warned not to return to Noeux-les-Mines.



"Not architecture but a dream in stone" . . . The Canadian War Memorial on Vimy Ridge, as it will appear when completed.

CHAPTER VII

VIMY RIDGE

VIMY RIDGE! Vimy, and the craters! Vimy and . . .

It was a dull misty morning and, standing there on the road near Cabaret Rouge, the Ridge seemed to me the most isolated ground in France; and the grandest, the most romantic.

The fog hid all the distant fringes.

The tall tower of Notre Dame de Lorette was visible on the left, and behind me I could see the top of the ruins at Mont St. Eloi. On the right, the church of Neuville St. Vaast was a white indefinite blur.

The hillside in front was scarred with white streaks—old roads and footways that time has not erased. I climbed, slipping and sliding on the wet, greasy soil. Up on the high ground, among the first shell craters and debris, the fog helped to bring back old scenes. Souchez and all villages and restorations were hidden, and all sounds were muffled. It was easy to give fancy full rein.

On and on and on. I climbed in and out of shell holes, skirting the bigger ones, marvelling that such conditions remained. Vimy seems more like it was the last week in April, 1917, than when I last saw it in 1918. Then it was covered with huts and dumps and water pipes, etc., and the old trenches and saps and front line seemed obliterated. Now, they seemed to have suddenly appeared again as if they had never really gone, and all the huts and pipes and dumps have gone. The Ridge is deserted, a wilderness, but to every veteran who served there it is one part of the old front that will hold him enthralled.

Old trenches and old craters! All around the Pimple one blunders into old wire and cuttings and gullies and strongholds. From there one can realize just what advantage old Fritz held, and if I

knew the names of the various cuttings on the lower slopes I might find every trench, or traces of them. 2nd Division veterans always talk about the Souchez sector and of trenches that existed at the "end" of the Ridge; trenches and old ways such as Rotten Row, Kellet Line, Boche Walk, Cooker and Morrow Alleys, Ration Road and Northumberland Avenue.

Wandering along the lower slopes, one sees old wire and iron stakes, battered helmets, and old mess-tin covers. Here and there a broken bayonet shows, and if you probe at the loose heaps between the shell holes you can always uncover something. Bombs of every kind are there. I've heard of a tourist finding one of the old "bottle bombs," a grenade made by filling a soda bottle with melinite and small scraps of iron.

One big crater beside the Maple Road has been filled in, but it seems that every other one is as it was, all the way along until Litchfield and Zivy Craters are reached. At Hill 140 a small memorial of the French bears the inscription: "Aux Morts De La Division Marocaine." Just beyond, at Hill 145, is the Canadian Memorial, but I went first along the old craters toward Litchfield. Broadmarsh is easiest to identify, as every contour seems unchanged, and it is easy to locate the old sniping positions which the Germans had there.

From the crater rim one gets a view of the permanent trenches, and the cemetery that is being established about 300 yards from the old front line and a little to the left of the Broadmarsh area. In it are buried many of those unknown dead they have found on the Ridge. Rarely a month goes by that they do not find at least one body. It is hard to estimate how many dead there are among the old

craters and shell holes, in chalky cuts and gullies, hidden in old ditches and weed tangles. ➔ Last year a tourist stepped into an old trench and almost trod on a body that had lain there all the years, barely covered by debris. ➔ Two boys visited the Givenchy Wood last summer, and while playing there found a German and Canadian soldier lying together, their hands locked so tightly that they were buried together as they had died. It was easy to read their story. One, or both, had been badly wounded, and they were trying to help each other when death overtook them. No weapons were there, no sign of enmity. They had died as comrades. ↵

Standing at Broadmarsh, the grey-white concrete trenches look ghostly in a fog, but the way the two lines run parallel tells to every visitor that each hour on Vimy in wartime held ominous possibilities. In many places the trenches and posts are not more than sixty yards apart. Near Durand Crater, about eighty yards inside our old lines, there is a small hut, and there someone is always on duty, ready to escort visitors through Grange Tunnel and into the old German underground. That small building is the only jarring note on the landscape. All else seems exactly as it was after the battle, a mighty memorial, more impressive than words can describe.

Over against La Folie Wood you can find much old wire in the rank weeds and bushes, some of it festooned to those short wooden stakes in use in earlier war days; and there are shell craters half filled with slimy green water, and old telephone cables, and rusted shells, and rotting rifle stocks, and here and there a half-buried steel helmet. Swing to your right and you cross old German trenches. There is much old wire, and in it you find those six-pointed "spreads" with dreadful spearheads that the Germans used only in a few places. They are there yet, in scores, sinister, horrible. And as you cross the Maple Tree road and go over to the craters you find many more trenches and emplacements and dugouts. I slid down one sticky, muddy entrance, taking a great fall of clay with me, unable to stop myself until I was

far down in a chalky passage so small I could barely keep on.

Once down, however, and the dugout itself was just as it had been in 1917. The walls were blackened where candles had been fastened, and there were tiny pools of water on the floor and much filth. The timber that had held bunks had been taken, but the place still seemed to reek of occupation. Only one "souvenir" remained, and I did not touch it. Near the door, just inside, a cross timber, a thin board was still nailed in place. The end of it had been broken off, but one familiar word was lettered on what remained—"Verboten."

In all, I found five old dugout entrances, but did not attempt to go down another. The craters seem unchanged. Here and there wire and stakes are still in place along the lips, and down in the craters themselves you can find stick bombs, Mills grenades, Stokes, old bully tins, water bottles, almost anything. Roaming around the old lines, I found two nine-point-twos under one small bush, and in two shallow craters there are seventeen Stokes shells. At three different places I uncovered sniping plates, and at one there is a broken, rusted Ross rifle. Along one bit of old trench an old bivvy is still visible. The corrugated iron roof is sadly sagged, but you can peer into the dark pocket and see a mass of rotting equipment at the far end.

The first crater inside the protected zone is, I think, Watling Crater. A remnant of De La Fourche, the old trench that used to run back through Neuville St. Vaast, is a short distance from the crater. Ross Street is easily found, and then the craters are all as they were—the Twins, Chassery, Albany, Devon, Vernon, Common, Birkin, Patricia, Grange, Duffield, Durand, etc. Our old front line is in quite fair condition in the area where it has not been made permanent. Goodman Trench, Grange and La Salle, and the P Line, are easily followed.

Roam around them and you'll remember those outstanding points that stick in your memory. Each spot rushes back, vivid, realistic, so that old duckwalks appear as if by magic and you look eag-

erly for a wisp of smoke at the place where the cooks were established. Suddenly you are remembering that a dug-out was just here. There is no trace of it, but you are certain.

Enquire, and you will be told that the entrance was filled in because it was unsafe and so many ardent tourists will not heed warnings. Then you remember the night you helped carry Jim or Bill or Davy down that C. T., and a lump comes to your throat. It's strange to be here, thirteen years after, and see every figure there in the gloom, and the stretcher, and Jim's white face. And you're all so silent, unspeaking. Why was it that during those long nights death seemed a fearful, an awesome thing, so that every man was hushed? And yet if the same thing happened in daytime no one seemed to mind it?

THE mud around the entrance to Grange Tunnel is as slippery as ever it was, and all about the permanent trenches the walking is bad on a wet day. Often one hears it argued that the Canadians "made" Grange Tunnel. I was very lucky to get the exact details from an officer who was there from May, 1916, until after the Vimy show. He said:

"We took over from the French on the 5th of May, the 172nd Company R. E. Tunnellers, and found they had four saps—three vertical ones, and another that ran under and parallel to our parapet. The Germans had easily the better of the mining situation and were nearly under our line at places, so we started four incline shafts at our third trenches, or resistance line. These shafts were to go to a depth of eighty feet, then forward under the outpost saps. We called these saps B, Y, D, and L. It was originally intended to take Vimy Ridge in the autumn of 1916, and D sap was to be used in blowing a large crater to protect the flank of attacking troops from the machine guns at Broadmarsh Crater. This mining objective was reached in the summer of 1916, and then was abandoned for the time.

"In January, 1917, it was definitely decided to mine Broadmarsh itself, and the sap was continued and a large chamber cut under the crater. Half the

charge of 30,000 pounds of ammonal was in place when the enemy blew from above and did a lot of damage, but eventually the mine was fully charged and tamped. Toward the last of March the Germans blew two more mines in that vicinity, so, as we wanted to keep as much ground as possible open for the assault, it was decided not to blow Broadmarsh. The tamping of sandbags was withdrawn, but the boxes of ammonal were so crushed by the enemy blow that they were left. (They are still there.)

"H was a vertical shaft driven and used as a listening post. N became a danger zone, and it was blown and counterblown many times. Three tons of ammonal were placed in N2 but were never blown, as by this time Grange Tunnel was under construction and it was policy to keep the mining situation quiet. The mine was under the lip of Grange Crater and is still there.

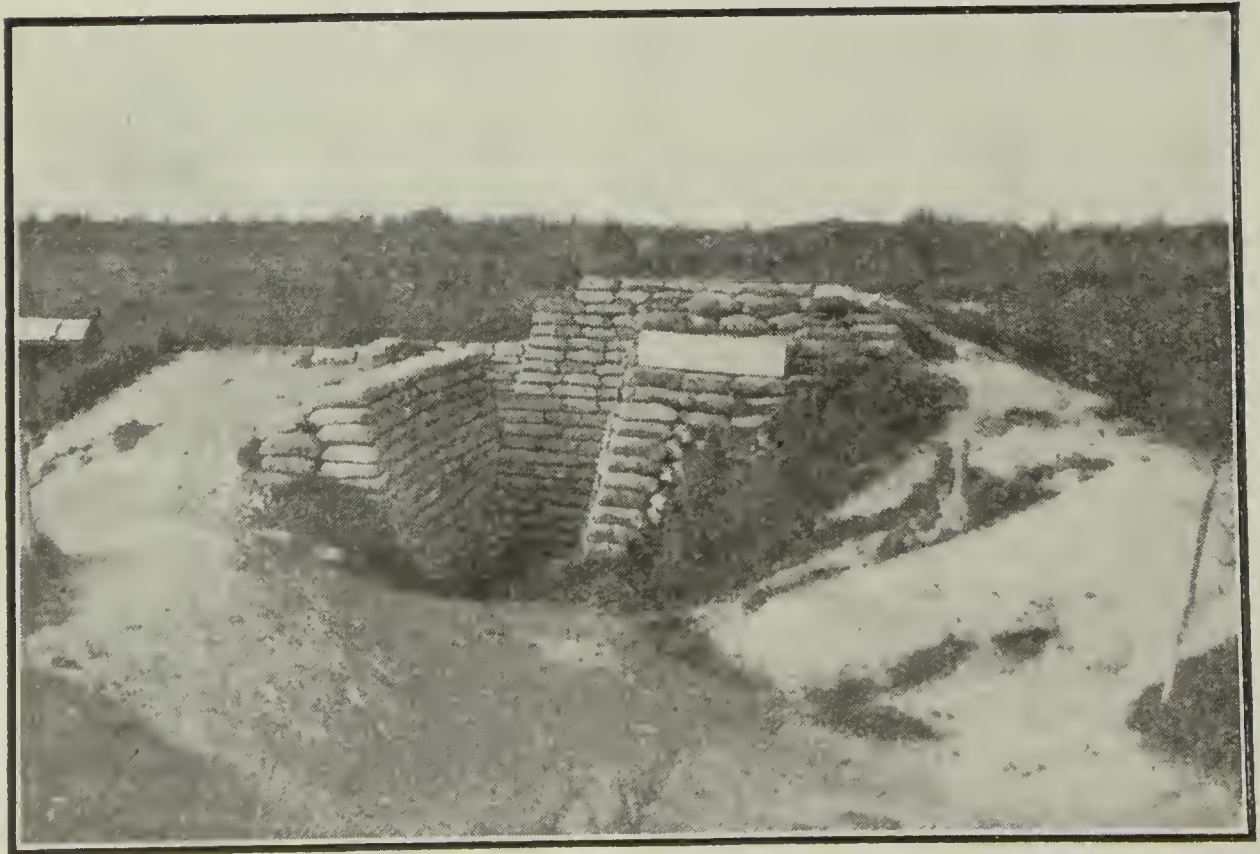
"This particular portion of the front was blown up by both sides on many occasions, but eventually the British got the upper hand and ran out galleries under the German posts and cut mine chambers there. On one occasion they were within two feet of a German tunnel. In the meantime, D, Y, B, L, all incline shafts, had been sunk and joined by a long lateral.

"The Canadian Corps took over the front in the autumn. By then the mining situation had completely changed, the enemy had been driven back and the front line made safe. All the saps were interconnected. The officers of No. 1 section had their dugout on the sunken road near Grange C. T. and it was decided to drive a tunnel from there to B sap.

"When completed, it was the first war tunnel, and attracted a lot of attention, and was used by others of the trench garrison. The higher command noticed it, and it was decided to continue it back to the quarries, or Zouave Valley. Incline entrances were made at Grange C. T., from a support trench, at the top of Cross Street, in quarries or Zouave Valley, and in a small trench fifty yards behind the quarries. A dynamo for lighting purposes was installed and various dugouts made, and places for water



April 9, 1917. Canadians advancing through a barrage to the attack on Vimy Ridge.



A section of the old Canadian front line on Vimy Ridge, restored in concrete.

tanks. Then a gallery with four inclines was made to the surface for trench mortar emplacements, and another for a machine gun emplacement. All the entrances were fitted with double gas doors. The tunnel itself was started about Christmas, 1916, and finished by March 15, 1917, though after that date many of the frills were added. A narrow gauge was laid, and at this period it was possible to walk underground from D sap through the mining system to the old Spanish caves under Arras. During the winter some of the deep levels were flooded, but this was the only difficulty.

"After the French left, every inch of mining and tunnels was the work of the 172nd Company R. E. The Canadian Corps supplied parties for carrying and helping with the spoil."

This account should settle all argument about Grange Tunnel.

CANADA'S part of Vimy consists of 240 acres. The Maple Road is 2½ miles long, and took two years to construct. Such a road was necessary, as there is no other approach to the memorial site, and it had to be well made, as loads to the extent of thirty tons had to be moved over it.

To build such a road was a much greater task than it may seem. All that area was honeycombed with dugouts and underground passages, and it was necessary to do much drilling and exploring before deciding on the best route to follow. After careful selection one way was picked on which only five dugouts had been discovered.

After the debris had been cleared the grading commenced. This was all pick and shovel work, as many bombs and shells remained hidden beneath the surface. Several times the workers drove their picks into stick bombs, and many of them were seriously injured. All shell holes on the berm of the road were filled with earth and well rammed, but those on the roadbed were pumped dry, filled with wet chalk and rammed. As the work went on, more and more dugouts were revealed until, instead of five, twenty-six were encountered.

When all the dugouts had been packed, concreted and covered with earth

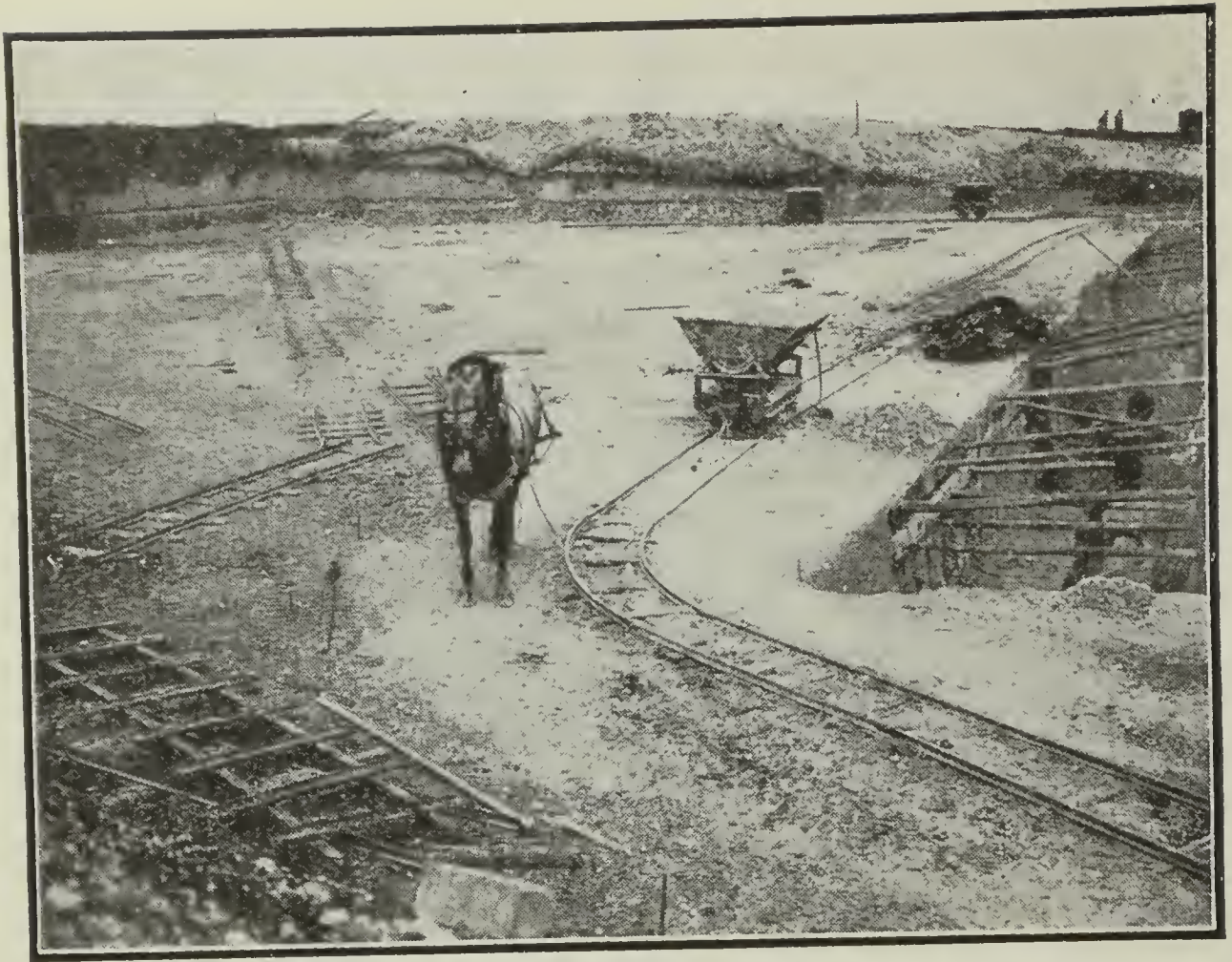
ready for the laying of the stone work, heavy rains set in, and after two weeks of wet weather two subsidences appeared. A drill was brought into play and a dugout was discovered at a depth of twenty-five feet. At a depth of ten feet the workers found the stairway, and they went down it to a bomb store. Thirty-six cases of stick and pineapple bombs were removed, and the entire stock looked as new as the day it came from the factory. Luckily the drill had gone down in the vacant spot beside the explosives.

Heavy stone was next set in the road, providing a perfect setting for the finishing surface, and today this road, lined with young maples, is one of the features of the Ridge. It leads direct to Hill 140, leaving the Lens-Arras highway a little beyond Thelus, just where that broad road dips over the top of the crest. At Hill 140 the road turns to the right to Hill 145, and there I got all the answers to queries concerning our Canadian Vimy Memorial.

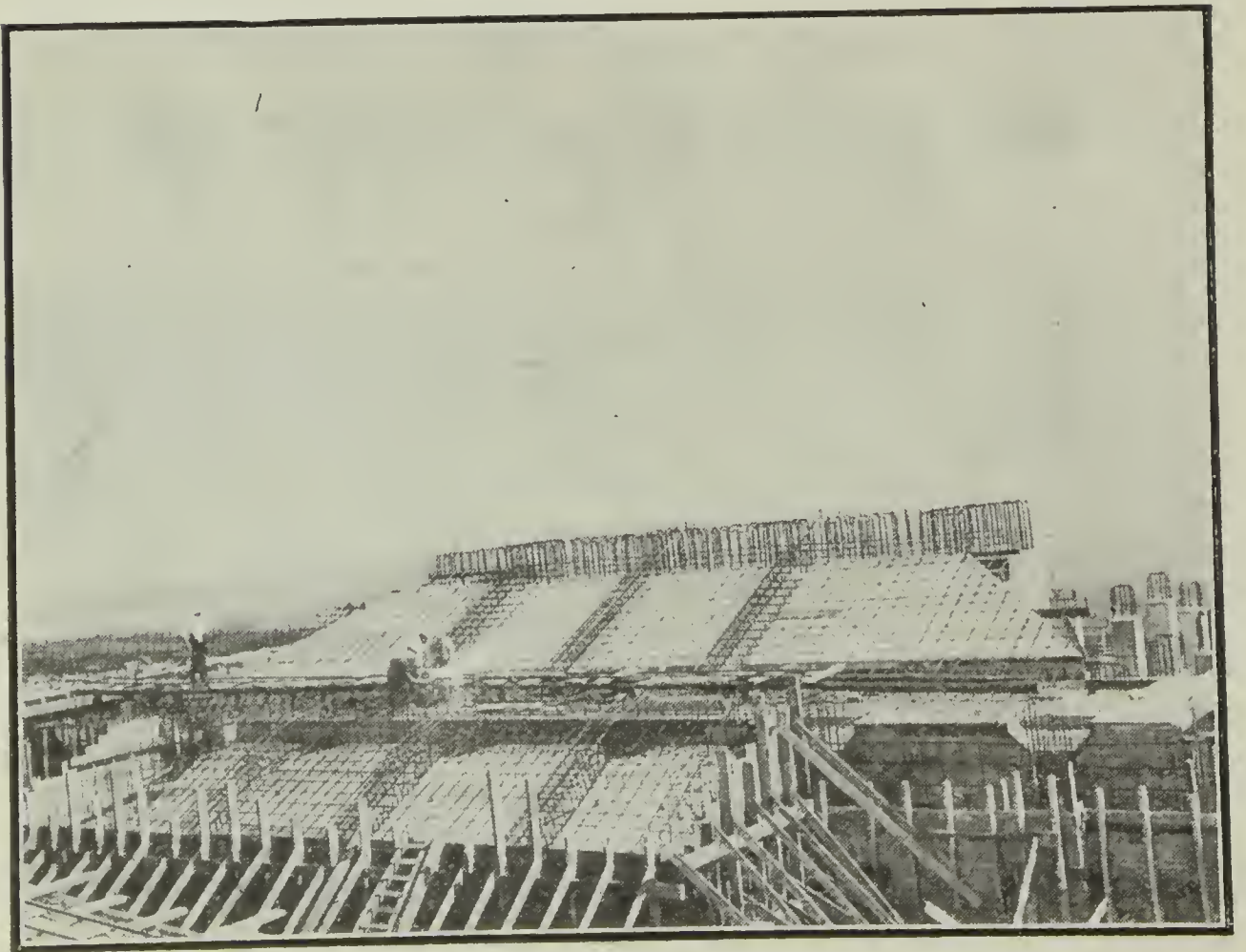
The memorial will not be finished this year or next. It may be completed in 1934, but were I a prophet with a reputation to protect I would say that 1935 will be the year that sees it complete in all detail.

The memorial has the finest site of any memorial in France or Belgium. There may be sites that provide a more dominating position, a more commanding view, but they are few and when found have far lesser military importance. Vimy has the importance, and the commanding view as well. Vimy was our Verdun, our French Ypres, one of the key positions of the Western front.

Add the fact that the Canadian Corps served longer as a corps in the Vimy area than elsewhere along the front, and you can see how peculiarly fitting it is to have the finest memorial of all on such a site. Very few places can excel the view obtained there, over the wide sweep of the Douai plain and all that famed Lens mining region. And from the plain, looking up at the Ridge, the view is magnificent, sublime; the memorial fitting there with a beauty and harmony that will never be forgotten.



Excavation of the site for the memorial was in itself a major operation.



The base of the huge memorial as seen during construction.

I WONDER how many of those who hurl impatient questions ever consider the time used in building like memorials? The Reformation Memorial at Geneva kept two architects and three sculptors busy for fifteen years before it was completed. The Leipzig Memorial was sixteen years under construction, the Queen Victoria Memorial fourteen years. The Victor Immanuel Memorial in Rome has been under construction for thirty years and, so far as I know, is not finished yet. Our Canadian Memorial was only begun five years ago, and we have only Mr. Walter S. Allward as both sculptor and architect. Selecting him was the happiest choice Canada ever made. Ask whom you will, any workman on the Ridge, any person who knows him, friend or otherwise, and you get the same answer: "He has no equal."

Had any other than he been in charge of the work, I am convinced that Canada would never have possessed such a memorial as will be hers. He has been adamant in his determination to have only the best material and the finest workmanship, no matter what the delay. In the face of all criticism he has remained unmoved, has paid no attention to all counter proposals, but has held unswervingly to his great purpose. The man seems inspired, as if this one great achievement were all he desires in life.

Nearly all the delay has been on account of the stone not being delivered as was expected. Yet, once you see the stone, you will agree that it has been worth the time. It is the finest that could be obtained. Mr. Allward toured Europe in his quest for what he wanted—a stone of exceptional durability. "We have to contemplate a structure which will endure, in an exposed position, for a thousand years—indeed, for all time," he said.

His search came to an end at Spalato, on the Eastern Adriatic coast, when he viewed the old palace of the Emperor Diocletian. Here was unmistakable durability, for the palace was built in the third century and even the carving on the eighty-foot outer walls is intact as well as the palace proper. The color of the stone also impressed Mr. Allward. Originally a pink buff, time had matured it to a rich amber. Near by were the

old Roman quarries from which the stone had come, and though they had not been worked since the fourth century it looked as if stone of any size could easily be secured. So, three years after the award was given to Mr. Allward, the stone contract was let to Henry T. Jenkins and Son, of England, a firm of national repute.

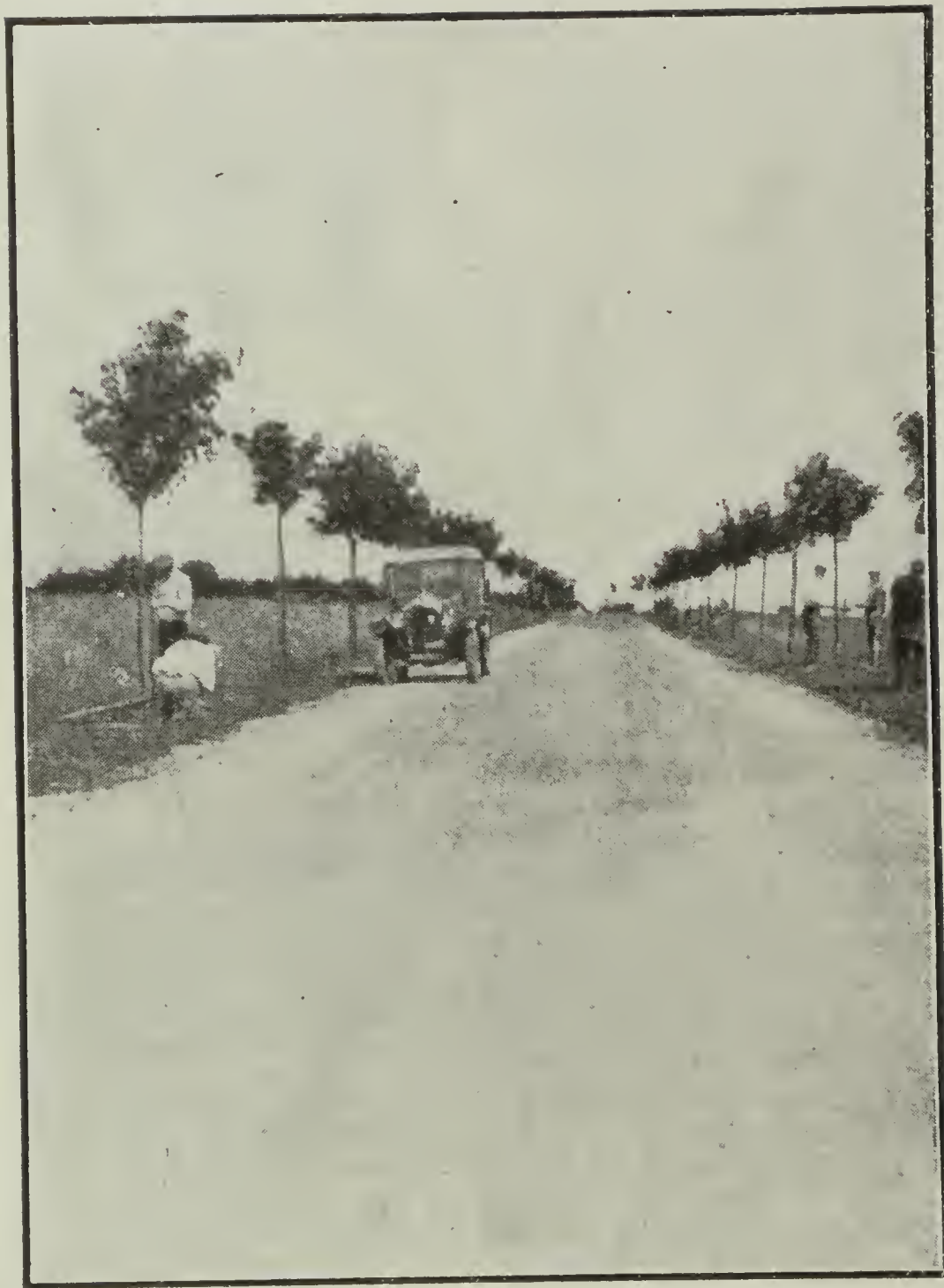
The quarry is at Trau, in Jugoslavia, a hotbed of political corruption, and Mr. Walter Jenkins, head of the firm, has had to contend with all sorts of difficulty. It took two months to install hoisting machinery after he had got it there, and everything he uses has to be brought in. It is forty-eight hours by rail to the nearest town, and none of his needs could be supplied there.

The stone is taken by water to Venice, and transshipped from there by rail. It comes in all sizes from a three-quarter-ton stone for the wall to the twenty-eight-ton block used for the figure "Canada." Soon Mr. Allward discovered that certain blocks had flaws, and so every one is carefully tested. Today there is not a stone in the memorial that has a blemish, but there is \$13,000 worth of discarded stone lying about the site; stone that could be cut for use in some smaller structure, but will not serve Mr. Allward's needs. Conditions in the quarry are such that Mr. Jenkins has moved as much as 45,000 tons of rock in order to get 350 tons of perfect stone.

Six thousand tons of stone are needed for the memorial, and at present all has been delivered with the exception of sixty tons. But the work has been held back sadly in waiting for the remainder. Each stone has its place in the structure and, while almost all needed for the tops of the pylons have arrived, those needed for immediate use have been delayed. This situation has arisen through the difficulty of reaching the larger stone first.

Mr. Jenkins has worked tirelessly to fulfill his contract. He has lost, and is losing much money in his undertaking.

The contract price was £113,494, and that did not include the stonecutters' wages, the cost of excavating, or any difference there might be in wages before the work was finished. Mr. Allward was



*Maple Road, lined with trees from Canada, leads over
Vimy Ridge to the memorial.*

given an original contract for five years at \$12,000 per year, and has now been nine years on the job, doing double duty as sculptor and architect. Half a million dollars have been spent and another quarter million will be needed to finish the work, yet Canada has not spent more wisely during the last decade. The work of keeping accounts is a strenuous task in itself. One account is in Canadian dollars, a second in English pounds, a third in Belgian francs, a fourth in French ones, and a fifth in Italian lira; and to these are added the nightmare of daily differences in exchange.

UNTIL you visit the spot it is difficult to understand the magnitude of the Memorial foundations. First there was the work of clearing the ground in front, for which steam shovels could not be used. One hundred thousand yards of earth had to be removed, and four feet of the surface was encrusted with stick bombs, dud shells and grenades. It was a pick and shovel work, carried on with every possible precaution. The workers were insured at a cost of forty per cent, and all realized how much depended on the way they used their tools, yet two men were killed and many injured before the task was completed.

The base of the memorial is 235 feet long and 168 feet wide. Drillers made sure that no further undergrounds existed after one dugout was filled, and then concrete was used. Fifteen thousand tons of masonry and concrete were placed before the memorial proper was begun, all thoroughly reinforced by steel.

The memorial itself is best described in Mr. Allward's own words:

"At the base of the impregnable walls of defense are the Defenders, one group showing the Breaking of the Sword, the other the sympathy of the Canadians for the helpless. Above these are the mouths of the guns, covered with olive and laurels. On the wall stands a heroic figure of Canada brooding over the graves of her valiant dead; below is suggested a grave with a helmet, laurels, etc. Behind her stand two pylons symbolizing the two forces, Canadians and French; while between, at the base of these, is the Spirit of Sacrifice who, giving all,

throws the torch to his comrade. Looking up, they see the figures of Peace, Justice, Truth and Knowledge, etc., for which they fought, chanting a hymn of peace. Around these figures are the shields of Britain, Canada and France. On the outside of the pylons is the Cross."

I cannot say whether or not such a detail was considered, but if you are at the memorial at sunrise, as I was one morning, you will see that the massive plinth is exquisitely flooded with sunlight, seems placed exactly for it; and if you are there in the afternoon you will see the setting sun throwing its light directly between the pylons, setting between them as it were, giving the watcher the feeling that the whole is a masterpiece of harmony.

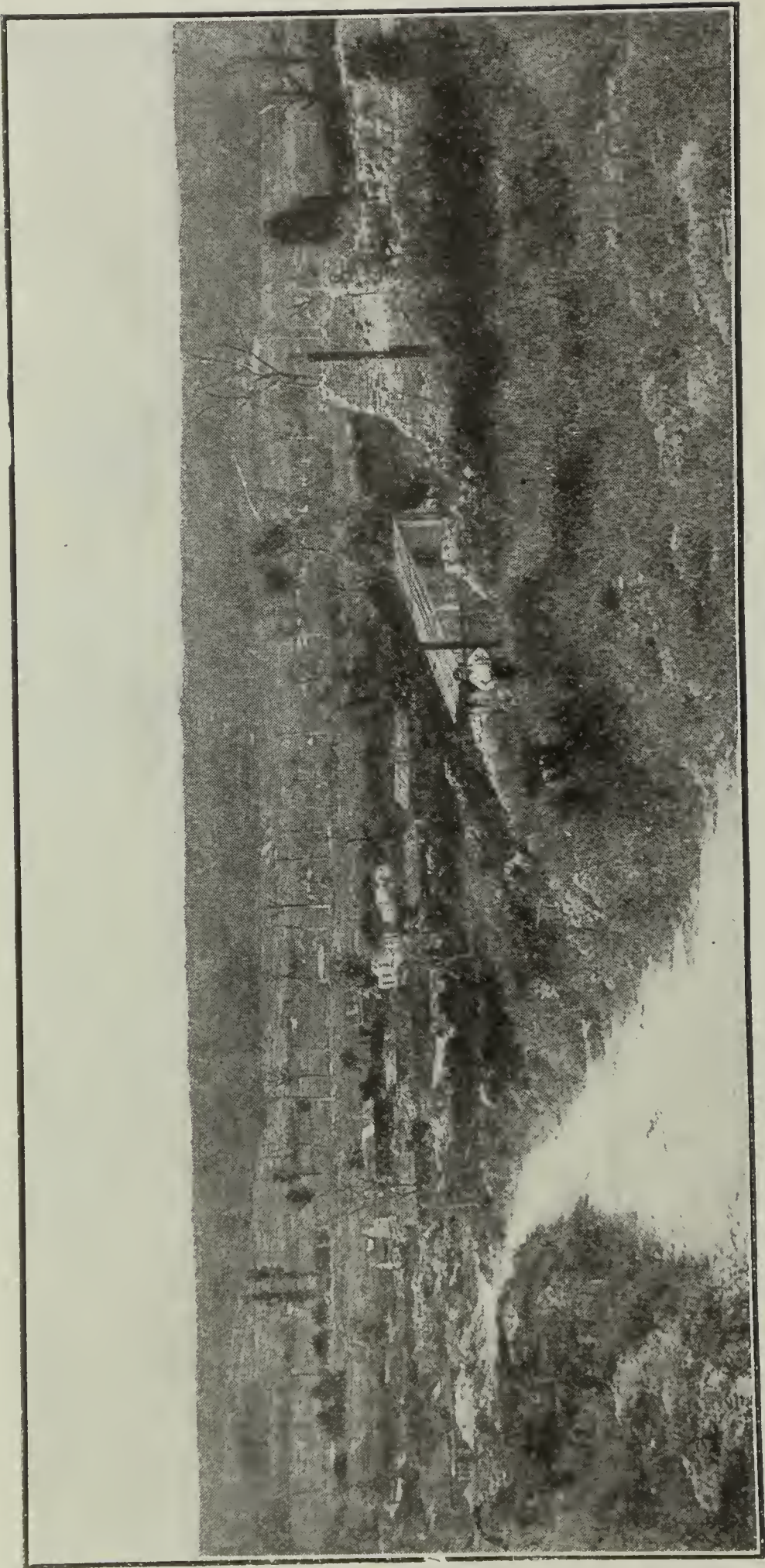
The memorial will be 187 feet in height, and will have a weight of more than 50,000 tons. Today the great plinth, bearing the name of Canada's 11,500 missing, is completed, and the two pylons are rising. Great stacks of steel bars, the reinforcing for the concrete centres of the pylons, dominate the skyline, and the scaffolding is five stories high. The huge derrick used is a landmark for all the Vimy area, and the immediate district is a village of offices and workmen's huts, while for a hundred yards about there are blocks of stone, those discarded and those cut ready for placing when their height is reached.

I visited one great roomy hut, the office of Lechat, who represents the contractor, a gifted man who has spent a lifetime at such work. He worked on the Menin Gate, and built the biggest memorial in Buenos Aires, Argentine Republic.

"It was bigger than this Vimy one," he said, "but the stone was not so hard, and the details far easier. This is the most difficult job I have encountered."

Mr. Allward has not, so the men at the memorial told me, made a mistake of one-eighth of an inch in all his figures given in five years—a record that they say has never been equalled.

It takes Mr. Lechat one year to complete the figures for the angles, then all is cut on paper first, and afterward on zinc. Each stone is cut and finished on the ground.



A wartime view of Vimy Ridge from Vimy village.

"This is not architecture, but artistry," Mr. Lechat said to me. "Such work was never schemed or planned. This memorial is an artist's dream, a glorious dream, a vision that Mr. Allward held until he could put it on paper. This was never conceived by the usual methods. It will be the most beautiful work in the world."

What has yet to be done?

First, the remainder of the stone must arrive, then be cut and finished and placed in position. Once the stone is on hand, it will not take a great while to complete the building of the pylons. But there is much more to be done. After all is in place, the studios must be built for the stone cutters. The figures at the top will require a studio sixty-five feet high and forty-five feet wide, with north and south "lights" fifteen by twelve feet in size. These lights must be of special glass and construction in order to resist the wind pressure encountered. There are many days when the wind prevents the use of the derrick, so one can imagine the pressure encountered by the sculptors at the top. Below, another studio forty-five feet in height must be built for the lower figures, and must have a brick foundation for the "pointing machine," mechanism that provides perfect measurements for the sculptors. And there must be a "lift" for the fragments from the upper studio. Stone chippings cannot be dropped below.

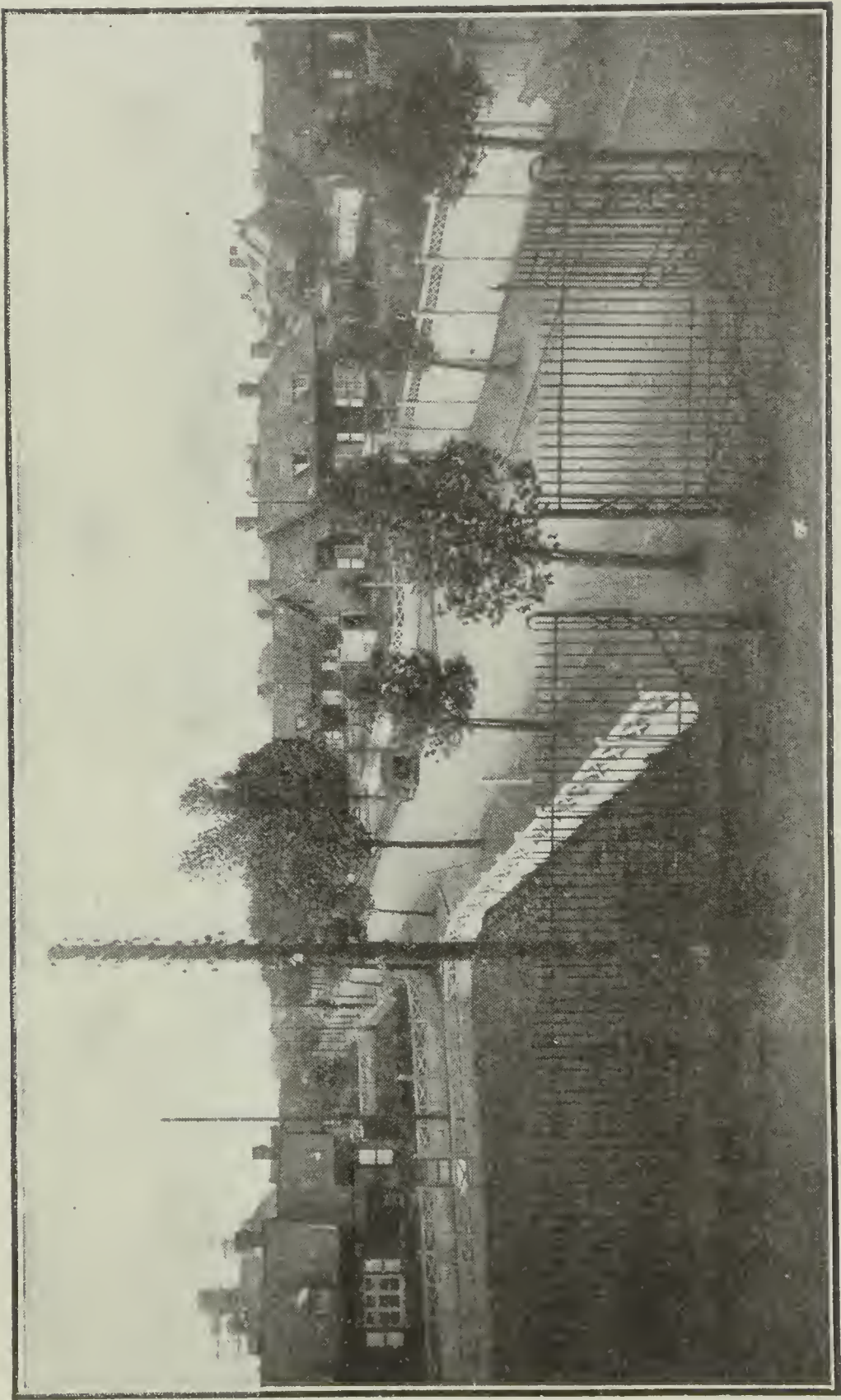
After the pylons are completed and the studios built, it will take at least twelve months for the sculptors to finish

their work. Then the studios and scaffolding must come down, and all the stone work be tooled, and cleaned with steam brushes and acids. The stone is beautiful, and the Lens coal fields do not mar it in the least, as they would cheaper stone. Time will yellow the structure, but it will not darken.

A year ago there was much criticism, and some hotheads advocated a drastic cut of the memorial, leaving it without the splendid 130-foot pylons and the ten figures at the top. Such a move would have been tragic. The memorial would have been dubbed "Canada's Folly," and through the years would live the legend that we began something we could not finish.

Canada has placed a magnificent work of art, after the design of a Canadian, in Europe, where so many great works of art are to be found. Europe, viewing the finished work, will change her impression of Canadians as a people. A great French artist spent three days about the Ridge, viewing the site, watching operations. He was shown a picture of the model of the memorial. Tears ran down his face and he said with deep emotion: "I am glad. It is the finest of them all, beyond words—and it is in France."

Mr. Allward is building greater than we know, is building for posterity. The veterans of the Great War will ever be glad that they were "in on it," and those that follow after will be proud that they are Canadians. Mr. Allward is giving Canada a heritage in stone comparable to that which Colonel McCrae gave us in "Flanders Fields."



Bully les Mines is another excellent example of post-war rebuilding.

CHAPTER VIII

AROUND GOUAY SERVINS

IT WAS another dull morning when we went into Lieven, but the town made one forget the weather. It is bright, new, modern as a French town can be, with splendid shop fronts, electric signs, handsome buildings; and I had to consult my map a long time before I could be sure I was on the same street where we had billeted in the winter of '17-'18.

We had stayed there in the cellars, on a wide street with the buildings half shattered by shell fire. Going along the centre of the street, the only path through debris, one had to watch carefully to make sure he did not pass his underground abode. Some old shops had a mass of old things in them, and more than one had improvised "signs" set up by the boys. Often you met a soldier parading solemnly in a tall silk hat or wearing a black coat and white gloves. There was one front that had barbed wire across it and signs warned all to keep away as the place was mined.

From Lieven we went up past the rubble heaps of Cité du Moulin to places on the outskirts of Lens. After a long time, walking back and forth, I judged that a fine shoe shop was over the cellar where I had shivered myself to sleep in December, '17. Going in, I made enquiries. The proprietor was a most gentlemanly fellow. He took me down the cellarway, and in a moment I found the corner we had occupied. The shop was built on the old walls, and the ledge around was untouched. The candle drippings were still on the brick.

I recollected that we had just returned after going out as a working party when a big shell demolished an entire building front just across the way from us. A billiard hall stands there today. All the street is nicely paved.

I wandered all over Lieven, then followed, as nearly as I could, the route of Cow Trench. Chalky upheavals in the waste land just outside the town were clearly the marks of trenches, but I could not be sure of my direction. I went to the railway embankment and tried to find the place we had used as a passage, hung with blankets on both sides, also the spot on top where Ambrose Herron and I lay nearly all one night trying to spot a German machine gun post on their side of the railway. Just after we left, one of our own whizzbangs struck on the rails where we had lain.

I went on into Cité St. Edouard, Cité St. Laurent, Cité St. Emile, and back to Cité St. Théodore. I well remembered that part as having concrete dugouts and cellars and passages under the streets. With another chap, I had gone through one of them until we were in close contact with a German machine gun post. It was there, too, that we had a splendid stove and a supply of coal in our particular chamber, and all went out on a ration party and were led into a water hole. Coming back, we stripped and hung our wet cloths on wires. As they steamed, Lieutenant Wilson came down. "The orders," he said, "are not to take your boots off. We may be called any time." "Very good, sir," we said, sitting up in our blankets and gazing respectfully through the haze that hovered over socks and trousers.

It is now a place of small, neat homes; and a one-armed soldier became voluble about Verdun when I tried to get some information about old surroundings.

Rambling about, I recalled the old "Minnie" house, a concrete dugout under a house cellar, and patrols there with Sergeant Ferguson.

Coming back to Lieven again, I discovered that some sort of a baby show was in progress. The Square was a mass of low-wheeled prams, and if all the infants there were natives of the town it is certain the district is doing well in providing a new army.

WE WENT back to Angres, and there studied the village until I remembered every detail of the spot through which the light railway used to run. During the war Angres was little more than a conglomeration of brick heaps. I recalled that a corner of brick like a post was so near the track that you could touch it, and a long stick reached out from it like a pump handle. On that side of the track there was not a house near that had a roof on it, and mostly the walls were but squares, with all the centre gone. On the right a few roofs remained, their rafters only, without tiles, looking like a crazy latticework. Today the track runs on the same road-bed and the ruined buildings are all restored, but beyond them and in the fields there are many half ruins and old cellars. Angres has more traces of war than any other village in that zone.

We went along the road to Grenay, a scattered village with a roomy boulevard, a modern dance hall, and a sports field. Passing the Maroc British Cemetery, we went into Bully Grenay, which has gardens that reminded one of Belgium. There were many wooden huts about, relics of the war, and countless children and dogs. A sad-faced army mule looked over a brick wall and seemed dreaming of the good old days when he had hauled an ammunition limber.

Stopping there a while in an estaminet, I talked with a chap and found he had an amazing way of getting funds. He had married a widow who had several children. The father had been killed in the war and the family was destitute, so the chap claimed that the children were "pupils of the country," and while they remained with him he and the mother were allowed so much money per child. If they went to work this money was withheld, so he was keeping a boy of eighteen at home doing nothing in order to get the pension.

We returned to Aix Noulette, which is but another "war" village—corrugated iron galore, gardens, children and dogs, with four sloppy estaminets and several enormous women. I went to see the old gun pit, and it is just the same as it was during the war. The wreckage of the gun has gone, but the chalk cavity with its high bank is exactly as it was. All who marched by that embankment will remember seeing the sixteen-inch gun that exploded there and killed so many of its crew.

Sains-en-Gohelle was our next stop, and we looked at the old dugout entrances along the road bank. The timbers have been taken away, but we risked going into some of them just to see what could be found. A big war sign points "To Hersin and Barlin."

We went to Hersin Copigny. The village looks exactly as it did in wartime, as if not a building had been added or taken away. After getting my bearings from the old church, I found my way to familiar places. There was the shop where we bought silk handkerchiefs and aprons to send home — souvenirs, madame always assured us, worked by the "daughters of France."

Madame was just as fat and moist as when I last saw her, and seemed to have on the same dress and the same black shoes. She was very genial until we showed no desire to leave more money with her, then suddenly became busy.

In war time there seemed to be more mixed traffic in that town than elsewhere. Once we sat in an estaminet for an hour and counted wagons from eighteen different units passing. All veterans will remember the transport of some British division that had as its distinctive sign a stork standing on one leg. A lorry of that kind was halted outside the estaminet when a weary-looking Tommy appeared, bowed with a "leave" pack. "Ullo, myte," said the lorry driver, "when's the war going to be over?" The footslogger pointed a thumb at the lorry sign. "When that ruddy bird puts 'is foot dahn," he grunted, and passed on.

The old château looked desolate, and that favorite of all cafés there, the Estaminet de la Place, where one could always find a full-throated chorus, was

closed, the shutters tight. The park without a single horse in it, added to the "deserted" aspect. We came by the cross-eyed farm—remember where the windows in the wall had crooked frames, and one could always buy French bread, no matter what orders were posted?—and went along the Vimy road and up that long, winding hill that was a heart-breaker if ever there was one in France.

At the top the view was wonderful. Barlin was to the right, and Hersin Copigny seemed nestled in the hollow as if huddled there for eternity. All colors were in the picture — red roofs, green ones, white walls and dark ones, grey roads and grassy fields and yellow-leaved trees, and in the distance the stacks of Bruay smudged the horizon.

The old Repos de Voyageur was just as ancient looking at the top of the hill. A wizened old dame looked out as we passed, but she was not the one who usually stood in the doorway and wiped her nose on her sleeve as we trudged by, breathless, and glad to be up the hill. Then those other old houses, with the sign, Hermant Cresson, Debitant, at the crossroads, seemingly in a wilderness. No other vehicle was in sight, and four crows flapped heavily over the fields. One seemed miles away from anywhere, but ahead, in order from left to right, were Petit Gouy and Grand Servins.

We passed countless muddy fields that would mire one, and at last were in Grand Servins. A sign placed by army authorities was still on the side of a building: "Q. 25. B. O. 8. Southern limit of Bussing Point. N. Limit 1,500 yards."

WE WANDERED to where an old chap was filling his pipe and talked with him, and he was pleased to meet a Canadian. It developed that he was the village smith, and, though not a mighty man, he had amassed many shekels during the strenuous days. Lowering his voice confidentially, he told me that he had bought many, many boxes of good British horseshoes from thirsty battery men for the sum of twenty-five francs, an investment that netted huge returns.

An old white house, spattered with dirt, I remembered as a cookhouse for a 5th Brigade unit, and in a corner was the

farm where they used to water their horses, despite the maledictions of the farmer, who wished them to use the green, slimed duck pond that now looked just as impossible as it did in war days. A big army sign read: "To Gouy Servins," and just beyond was a bare field where the Y. M. C. A. tent used to be.

We invaded the old "tobac" shop, but mademoiselle had been long gone—married to an English sergeant and doing well. Her brother was there, a one-armed chap, who, like all French veterans with whom I have talked, had done his bit at Verdun. He was a very decent sort and proud to show his medals. The family had a very warm spot for Canadians, and soon we learned the reason. In wartime they had only one horse to do the farm work with, and it had some foot trouble during the busy season. A 2nd Division battery was in the village, and they "loaned" a horse each day to the old farmer, though how he drove a Canadian animal will remain a mystery to me. He was going out with a huge grey Percheron as we drove on, driving the beast with one rein, while he barked a continual string of French commands.

"This is Gouy Servins." The army lettering stared down at us, and along the houses were the old billet numbers. One read: "20 Men 20 Horses." The old water hole looked the same as in '17, and the three ducks were, I am sure, direct descendants of the trio that graced those green waters then.

There are houses in Gouy Servins that must have had their mud walls dried shortly after the Flood. They have thatched roofs and great heavy doors with curious iron hinges, and the tiled floors are uneven and as chilly as a new sergeant-major. Yet in the most of those homes you will be given a bowl of coffee and asked to sit by the fire, and they will tell you how much they loved the Canadian soldats. There were, of course, many reasons for their doing so. An old chap in a queer smock told me that he smoked nothing but Canadian tobacco during '17, and his good wife told me of the chocolate the soldiers fed her grandchildren. To hear them tell it almost brings a lump to one's throat as one thinks of the greatheartedness of



Lieven as it was during the war.



One of the restored collieries at Lieven.

those rough lads who billeted there in the rat-haunted stables and lofts of Gouy Servins.

We went back again past the alder swamp above Souchez that was the sugar factory site, the scene of bloody fighting in '15; through Souchez, and along to Cabaret Rouge, from whose trenches the French carted a load of corpses each evening. Twice they took that stronghold from the Germans at the point of the bayonet, and twice they were driven from the welter of blood and mud that remained; then the Germans were ousted a third time, never to return. Now it is a British cemetery, a great kite-shaped affair, with many, many Canadian graves.

GO ALONG Zouave Valley and you can read the old trenches on the side of Vimy as if you were looking at a map. The old crisscross of white is plainly marked in most places, old cuts in that hill of death that will survive many years yet. On the opposite side of the road from Cabaret Rouge an English veteran has a small hut converted into a lunchroom which he has dubbed "The Better 'Ole," and both his goods and his prices are high-class. Keep on going by the crossroads, and where the 2nd Engineers' dump used to be is now an estaminet, with carts and horses always waiting outside. Where the salvage dump was is a brasserie.

How many veterans remember where the tent at La Targette that housed the picture show was located, and the night the airman from Mont St. Eloi crashed outside, missing the tent by inches? His grave is there in the cemetery, and there is a windmill where the tent used to be. And do you remember the "Y" hut on the Mont St. Eloi road? It is gone, and is a field piled with what looks like pressed straw. One night Fritz shelled that spot with a "rubber" gun, and put a limber up one of those trees near by.

At the old Ritz Corner we got a girl from the estaminet to let us into what they have named "Marshal Petain's Labyrinth." The story goes that General Petain used the chalk caves there as his headquarters in '15, and after the Grange Tunnel was reopened at Vimy and

visitors began to swarm there, the thrifty ones at the corner opened up the chalk caves and called them "Canadian dugouts." They made money. You can see all the Grange Tunnel and the front line there for nothing, but it costs you a few francs to look at the "Canadian dugouts" at La Targette. It's worth the price, however, to those who were in those draughty, smelly depths in wartime. They look just the same today, and the entrance is much better. Unfortunately, the owners have not insisted that no one should mar the walls with inscriptions, and all the names carved during the war period have been lost in a mess of French and foreign names.

We went on to Maison Blanche. The German cemetery there is a sight that halts one. Forty thousand black crosses are in that great sea of black, and more are being added. A number of stone memorials are there, some erected and some lying as they were left. A gardener told me that they had moved the main one in from Douai; that the Germans had erected it in that town during the war and when the French went to move it they were badly startled by finding a shell hidden in the column. But after an investigation they found that it was nothing more dangerous than a plan of the memorial which a methodical engineer had placed there for safe keeping.

Going on to the big farm across the road we went in and asked to see the famous caves there. Madame gave us candles and pointed to her kitchen door as if that were as much as could be expected of her. The rest was up to us. We went into the usual French farmyard, crossed into the barn, where a dog tried his best to get at us, walked past a few pigs and cattle and out into the garden, where the lifting of two sheets of corrugated iron revealed a deep cavity. Slippery stone steps led down to deep, dark depths below, a place kept in perfect condition.

ALONG the chalk walls there are some examples of carving that ought to be preserved. Nearly every name in it is Canadian. Their number is legion, so I picked out the following ones at random:

"B. S. Stevenson, Ottawa. C. W. Nunn, 52nd Battalion. 719017, C. W. Mac-

Arthur, 16th Battalion. S. T. Tambley, Teulon, Manitoba. J. Bowater, 14th R. M. R. 643707, A. R. Mitchell, 15th Battalion. James Brown, Marquette, Manitoba, 28/3/17. A. Betts, 1st Battalion. F. A. Corby, 4th Battalion."

A man's head was very well done. So was an emblem of the masonic order, the 48th Highlanders' badge, and a badge of the 96th Saskatchewan. "C. Robinson, 123rd Battalion," was another name; and then came a splendid piece of work, a letter box. It was nicely lettered, "TORONTO, FRANCE, 1917. LETTER BOX," and underneath were the names of the carvers, "802293, W. P. Beckett," and "799610, T. Mason." "G. W. Fowler, 129 Wentworth St., Hamilton, Ont.," was next; then came a 92nd badge, and "86th Machine Gun Battalion." "887386, A. J. Ambler, Mch. 10/17, and C. E. Eaton, 34th Battalion," followed. Several persons have taken photographs of these carvings, but there has been no earnest attempt made to save them.

After spending an hour roaming around the passages and high chambers, we went back to the house, getting safely by the vicious dog. Speaking with madame, she told us that several of the finest carvings had already been stolen, that it was impossible to watch everyone.

We went ambling around La Targette

again to make sure we had not overlooked anything and to see a memorial on the side of the road that I had thought French. It was a rather curious one, and I discovered it had been erected by Czechoslovakia.

We stopped to talk with a lady who sells beer at the left of the road in La Targette, and she told us a most interesting story about a Canadian woman coming to her home two years ago and wishing to search her cellar. Those house cellars were the shelters of gunners who had a battery at La Targette, and the woman said her brother had been there. She probed and peered in all places, and stayed such a long time that she was left alone. When her visitor had gone the lady of the house went into the cellar and saw that several bricks had been pried loose, and that there had been a hiding place behind them. What the Canadian woman came for—and got—will never be known.

There is a wide field after Maison Blanche, and several mounds where the old railhead used to be. Four concrete gun positions, British, are next on the left. Then you are back at Ste. Catharines, and on the wall at the bottom of the hill, to the right, huge black letters in war paint demand, "WHAT HAVE YOU SALVED TODAY?"



Noules Mines main street is now bright, new and modern.

CHAPTER IX

"GO FROM HERE . . . !"

A MAN without feet, his legs cut off at the knees, came walking toward our car as we left Arras via St. Nicholas. He was a French war veteran and walked on two "peglegs" as well as if he had his own original pedals.

Once clear of the close-grouped village, the road runs through a vast stretch of seeded fields without a fence or barrier. There are several cemeteries on the right, Bailleul Road Cemetery East being the largest. Just beyond it, or behind it there is a German one, not very noticeable against a background of small trees. More open fields with many crows flapping over them, and then we passed several small houses clustered on a high bank—neat yellow dwellings looking as new as if just taken from a parcel.

Over on the left is the dark green of Farbus Wood, and in the same direction, more to the rear, the steeple and white-walled houses of Thelus catch the morning sun. Following these are more fields, vast brown slopes with green shoots tinting them, and Bailleul is in front of us, with Arleux en Gohelle directly in line. We pass under a railway, and the station is on the right, perched like a huge nest. A French Aunt Eppie Hogg is being helped down to the road by the village "skipper," and seven geese stand in line on a bank and watch us go by. The village school, and then we pass an amazing amount of elephant iron, used as pens and shed roofs. There are two nice villas, with imposing fences before them and tiled walks, then a few wooden huts and a war ruin.

We turned toward Farbus Wood, where the road went on to Henin Letard. There is a shrine at the corner, more war cellars and a windmill. We stopped to talk with a shrivelled old lad

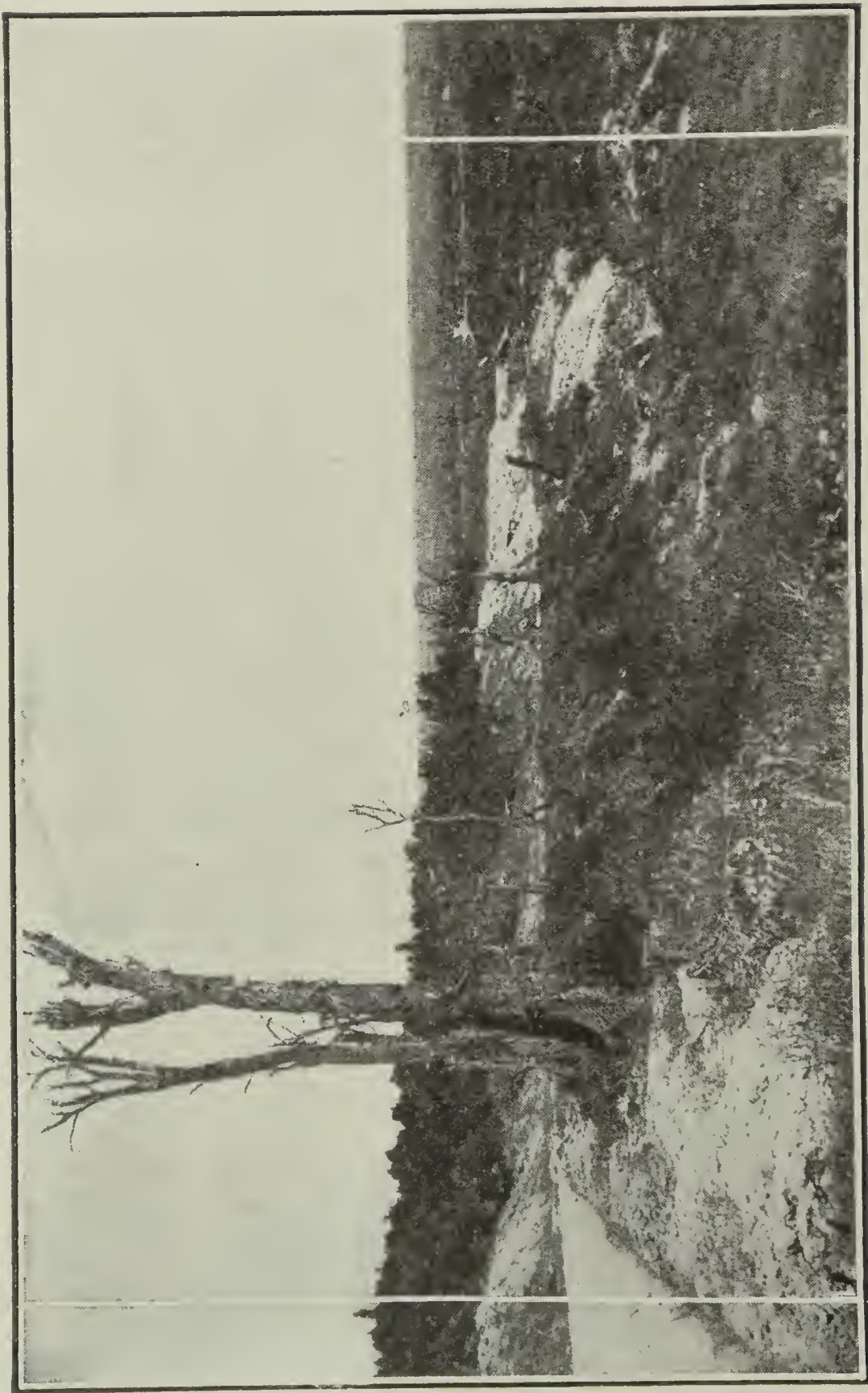
at the local estaminet, and he pointed toward Arleux Cemetery and said:

"Go there if you want to find anything of interest. All the land is honey-combed with Boche dugouts and tunnels. Twice they had a part of the cemetery cave in, and the ground is always sinking."

We went on past the cemetery, along a sunken road lined with young trees. Here and there were old stumps and stubs of the former trees, and old dug-out entrances. Arleux is featured with corrugated iron. Such salvage abounds along the old lines in France, but Arleux has a lion's share. Every home and yard is decorated by it. Kennels, pens and sheds are built of it, and fences, and it is left in piles where there are no more places to use it.

It is a scattered village, and there are many old army huts. A modern concrete shrine decorates a corner, and there is the usual memorial. The Mairie is the most imposing building. There are no sidewalks, and numberless ducks were waddling gaily to the puddles along the route. There are just two cafés in the place, and both were empty of customers and the mesdames wanted only to sell beer. They had no time for war gossip. From the last houses Willerval and Farbus Wood seemed merged, and the Ridge forms a majestic background, with the huge derrick at the Memorial silhouetted against the sky.

WHERE the road reaches Willerval, the village is almost hidden at the entrance by numbers of grain stacks. It is a small place with two narrow streets and a Y turn, and elephant iron dominates. Three cafés supply refreshments and a large water tank, which overlooks the dwellings, comprise the village.



Thousands of Canadians will remember this death trap—the Vimy Road leading down from the Ridge to Vimy village.

Old women seem to be very active in that vicinity. One was using a shovel and pick as vigorously as a man, while another had scaled to the top of a stack by means of a ladder, and was making some necessary repairs to its covering. An old man with some ailment akin to palsy was seated in one of the cafés, and after a short conversation told us an interesting story.

Very shortly after the first homes of Willerval were built, two cars came struggling through the ruts and from them came a quartette of stiff-backed men. It was soon seen that they were Germans. They did not make any enquiries in the village, but went into one of the fields and there spread a map, around which they gathered. The tallest of the four, a man with a Kaiser mustache, stood and pointed out all the landmarks. The others listened, then all bent over the map again and soon broke into a loud argument. For an hour they wrangled, with such violence that the watching Frenchmen were certain there would be hostilities; then all climbed into their cars and drove away, leaving the map lying on the ground. This old Frenchman promptly secured it. He showed it to me and it proved to be a rough sketch of ten gun positions. The Germans must have been gunnery officers, and no doubt had come all that distance to settle some argument about landmarks.

Farbus is the most interesting village near Vimy. If anyone could get good pictures of it they would have something unusual, for Farbus is literally built on and between concrete emplacements. One borders the street, its gaping mouth whispering to all passers-by, and three are in one yard. Others, almost hidden among buildings, are used as tool sheds and poultry pens.

All around are signs of war. Farbus is a distinct war village. Old cellars with haggled walls above the weeds and grass meet one coming from Willerval, which is only divided from Farbus by the railway track. On the right is a wood of new growth spaced by great gaunt stubs of war-killed trees. A French cemetery is on the left as you reach a turn to the right. The houses are all brand new, and smart with red

and white paint. The church is a fine building, with a most picturesque background—a big group of twisted trees and stubs, relics of the war.

A few army huts are on the outskirts nearer Vimy. A short, black-haired man was standing beside them, and soon I had him talking. He told me that in and about Farbus they had dug up as many souvenirs as had been found on Vimy. In one cellar they uncovered a cache of 100 bottles of good pre-war wine. In another were cases of German machine-gun ammunition, and in yet another three uncut cheeses in a sack. He showed me rolls of barbed wire that had never been unwound, and a string of water bottles on a wire as though some soldier had been taking them to the water cart. Strangest of all, they found four new German lanterns, carefully crated.

Farbus furnishes a change of scenery. The stubs and dead trees that seem contorted in agony, the wood above the village, and the great concrete places in among the homes, all serve to lend a distinctive setting.

WE PUSHED on to Vimy village, entirely rebuilt. From Farbus you go up a long straight stretch of cobbled road, a street of small houses and wooden huts. To the right is a rough mound, at which diggers recently found 3,000 shell cases. The Vimy Cemetery is well kept and pretty. Back of the rows of cottages you see a few old cellars, but most of them are hidden. Near the square is a red and white boucherie, and a plentiful supply of meat was hanging over the narrow sidewalk. Ranged under it, and trying desperately to reach it, were three small dogs.

The Grande Place is well planned, but its decoration was a lone dump cart. The Hôtel de Ville would do credit to a much larger town, and the school is large and modern. The post-office is a swaggering building turned as if to eye the new church. This is built on the ruins of the old church, which all will remember as trenched and wired into a regular strong point during 1917.

Toward the Ridge, La Folle Wood is a dark background, and at its edge the concrete lips of a water reservoir lead many



This railway station is at Avion—not a healthy spot in the old war days.



Rue Nationale, Mericourt, now shows little evidence of once having been in ruins.

visitors in a wild-goose chase. They think it an old gun emplacement. Several houses over that way, near the old road, are large and have white shutters.

Petit Vimy is a dull little spot boasting a brewery and a police headquarters. From there, Vimy looks a much larger village than it really is, a picturesque spot of fine new homes. We visited four estaminets, and found no one who could tell us anything about the place. The men to whom we spoke said the Government had brought in laborers to clear up all that ground, that the residents had nothing to do with it, and few of them had lived there before the war. Their chief trouble now was the danger of old shells. They have gone over the land carefully more than twenty times, yet with each spring planting they uncover more big ones.

We went back to Vimy and on toward Lens, passing a fine football field and water tank on the right, then many old mine shacks and Nissen huts. A mine was operated there for a short time, then abandoned.

La Chaudière consists of a bright yellow house with a café sign displayed, a white-walled house and a red one, and a wooden hut. That is all. No trace of a trench is there, or any sign of war.

Givenchy, on the left, looks like a very large village, and from the Memorial at Vimy seems to loom above all the countryside, huge, imposing. To the right, Mericourt seems quite a distance. The railway embankment cuts between, without a visible sign of the old cutting where the long German dugouts were, and all over that expanse are green and red-brown fields that have entirely erased every old trench we knew. It did not seem possible that Canada Trench could so vanish, but there is not even the usual chalky earth by which one could trace it.

Going on, I saw many big houses near, and three huge buildings that appeared to be a factory. I asked what they were. "The brewery," came the answer. "This is La Coulette." It is all brick and concrete, all that area we knew so well, all buildings and walls and red roofs and paved yards, a bustling place. The brewery is an enormous one. The houses

have green and white trimmings, and some sport little trees in front. On the left, farther on, are a few war cellars. That is all.

WE WENT through a subway and up a long grade beside many wooden buildings, and saw a sign, "This is Eleu." The Café de la Mairie was its principal feature, a small place on the right. The canal lay on the left, with four barges close together near the bridge. On one, a woman was hanging out a huge washing on numerous ropes, and on another a girl was hauling water by a rope and bucket.

We entered Lens, and found wide streets, fine homes and shops, all as modern as any American town. The station is of concrete, unique in all respects. Its interior is pictured, in tiling, with all the mines of the place. A scene shows the miners coming from work, and another the arrival of a train. It is very well done. The seats in the waiting room are of startling design, so painted that they seem a part of the wall.

Yet this very modern building is slowly parting in the middle. It is built directly over a huge German dugout that was not discovered in time, and nothing can be done to save the situation. Many more places in Lens and vicinity are having like troubles. The Germans honeycombed the place with tunnels and underground refuges, and our shelling had blown so much wreckage over them that their presence was not suspected. Then came Portuguese and other foreigners, hired to fill in all dugouts and craters and clear the land at so much per acre. Inspectors were there, but these were often deceived, and the workers concealed all signs of underground passages. Now the timber supports have rotted or fallen and the surface is subsiding. In countless places roadways are caving in, railways are dipping, and houses sinking at one corner. France will not be finished with war damages for years to come.

Leaving Lens, we went along the La Bassée road, across the zone of what used to be Combat, Chicory and Commotion trenches, and saw no signs of them or the concrete that used to be at the hillock near Cow Alley. Then we passed

between Cité St. Emile and Cité St. Laurent. St. Emile was white and yellow in the sunlight—white-walled houses with yellow trimmings—and across the road Laurent looked like a model mining suburb just opened for inspection. It seemed to be built of light grey concrete. Its streets were paved with it, and the houses were of concrete blocks. Fences and homes were in even lines, all laid out like a checker board.

AFTER Laurent there is a long open stretch on both sides of the road—the bare, bald slopes of Hill 70. All along you see patches of rough ground, former strong points or big craters, still eyesores to the farmers, and as you get to the crest you see more and more of the concrete emplacements that are still intact. On the left at the top are five wooden huts, placed there to entertain tourists. I went over to the left where the old redoubt used to be, and found piles of earth and chalk and iron screw stakes and barbed wire. Much has been done to level it, but it is still a sinister mound.

Across the road, the top of a machine-gun post peeps from a heap of loose chalk. As I went over to the right I came to more and more of these mounds, and then to where a crew of workmen were clearing heaps. They were shovelling the piles into carts, clearing the ground, and with every mound they found all kinds of things. I watched an hour, and saw them come upon seven rolls of barbed wire, twenty-eight Mills bombs, thirty-three stick bombs, three German mess tins, seven Stokes, three shovels, four entrenching tools, and two German steel helmets, as well as old petrol tins and much angle iron. It is very slow work, as many live shells are found, as well as bombs.

Going back to the shacks, I entered one and found a French veteran, the proprietor. He told me he had come there, as he was sure that Hill 70 would be one of the main show places after the war. "It was all craters and strong points," he said, "and all these tunnels were open." He said that all of Hill 70 was tunnelled, that the Germans had twenty-four kilometers of passages by which they could go to Mine 16 at Lens, to Ver-

melles and to Camblain, and great chambers they called the Hindenburg Dug-outs. He said there were twenty entrances to the tunnels, and he did an immense business for a time with tourists. A rope was needed to help one in getting down, as the stairways were rather steep, but, once below, all was well as the tunnels were extremely well timbered and roofed. But the mine authorities at Lens own all that area, and they blocked all the entrances and stopped the tourists. Last year an English colonel and another officer came to the scene. They are trying their best to get the area reopened as a sightseeing place, and it may be done.

We went on down the slope to the old chalk pit, the "original," and found it a busy place. Many men were working there, burning lime. Over on the right Bois Hugo is very thick and green. Near it are many chalk traces of trenches, and many more rough hillocks. Half the area seems given over to them. On the distant left the craters at Loos gleam in the sunshine.

We returned over the hill, after wandering around the edge of Bois Hugo, where shell craters and old rifts in the chalk give the whole slope the look of a diseased land. All along the way the farmers and their helpers were working patiently to remove the mounds of debris. I saw them uncover a brazier at one spot, with two blackened bayonets that had been used as toasting forks.

WE WENT through Lens and turned left into Avion. It is a prosperous looking village, with many cafés and beer signs. Avion is a hotbed of communism. The mayor and members of the council are all communists. It went "red" in the last town election. In one of the estaminets we sat and heard England denounced as the biggest enemy the poor man has.

Along the streets prosperous-looking and very modern buildings are sandwiched among war shacks. Here and there are old cellars and broken walls, but for the most part you see only new brick and concrete and splendid gardens. There is an up-to-date and well kept sports field, and a healthy lot of children. Avion has a different atmos-



La Targette as it is today.

phere than most of those mining villages. You feel the aggressiveness of the people, their determination to make Avion a place just a little better than all others.

I remember that it was just over to the left of Avion, at the water hole, that one of our new men fell into a water hole just as an officer came up. "What's the matter?" he asked. "Got your wind up already, dropping down there?" "No, sir," came the answer. "This is camouflage I've got on. I'm to be a water lily."

We were soon in Mericourt—all red, brown, white and green, spick and span, small and quiet, but very clean looking. There are many well-made fences and good gardens, and near the embankment a number of small bushes help with the picture. The rebuilt streets are wide and straight, and the school is a splendid building. We stopped at an estaminet and talked with the madame in charge. She told us she had been forced to cook for a German officers' mess, staying in a cellar for a long time after our guns began to pound the village. She and three of her neighbors had buried all their valuables beside a huge gate post, and when they returned after the war they recovered their wealth without difficulty. She seemed very proud of

having so easily outwitted her captors. After the Germans left Mericourt, one of their dogs came back to the place and stayed there. Six pups were born, and their descendants are legion. I saw three of them, large black dogs with Hindenburg jaws.

A long open stretch, with wide fields on both sides, farm lands that make you wonder how the French can get much done after they have journeyed away out there from the villages, and then you are at Acheville. The mound of Mount Forêt is in sight, but all the ground looks as if it had been smoothed by some great rake. The village itself is plastered with advertising, and shows plenty of corrugated iron, turkeys, and a new bright church.

Arleux is over on the right, and as we studied the long sloping banks for the faintest trace of old trenches I saw something moving, picking at the sprouting green things and winter wheat that had been sown. It was a partridge. We counted more than twenty within 100 yards.

Fresnoy is the next village after another section of grain fields—great fenceless areas that seem deserted, yet are most carefully cultivated. Crows

flap overhead and are the only other travellers in the district. Just outside the village there are sugar beets in plenty, and gardens, and we see a new feature. Houses and the church are most modern in light-painted walls with black strapping.

In a café we found a chap selling tickets on the football pool in Lens, and heard the new English tariff discussed, and met a commercial man from Ant-

werp, and went away feeling that this village out in the wilderness is surely in touch with the world. A fat madame stopped us and tried to sell us her turkeys, thinking we were buyers, and when we explained our errand she threw up her hands.

"For the love of Joseph and Mary, go from here," she cried. "There is nothing of war, not a thing, and on Vimy there is plenty."



A reminder of the new underground—entrance to the caves at La Targette.

CHAPTER X

SLOPPY OPPY

OPPY IS SLOPPY." That is a common saying among the British now in the Arras zone, and the word "sloppy" is very descriptive. The houses have no gardens or trees or walks in front, but are right on the sidewalks or where the walks should be. All the streets are a mess of chalky clay and water, and barn doors open on them, spreading straw and filth. Corrugated iron, red and rusty, is used conspicuously, and the village looks as if its inhabitants were making a "civil resistance" against anything orderly or clean.

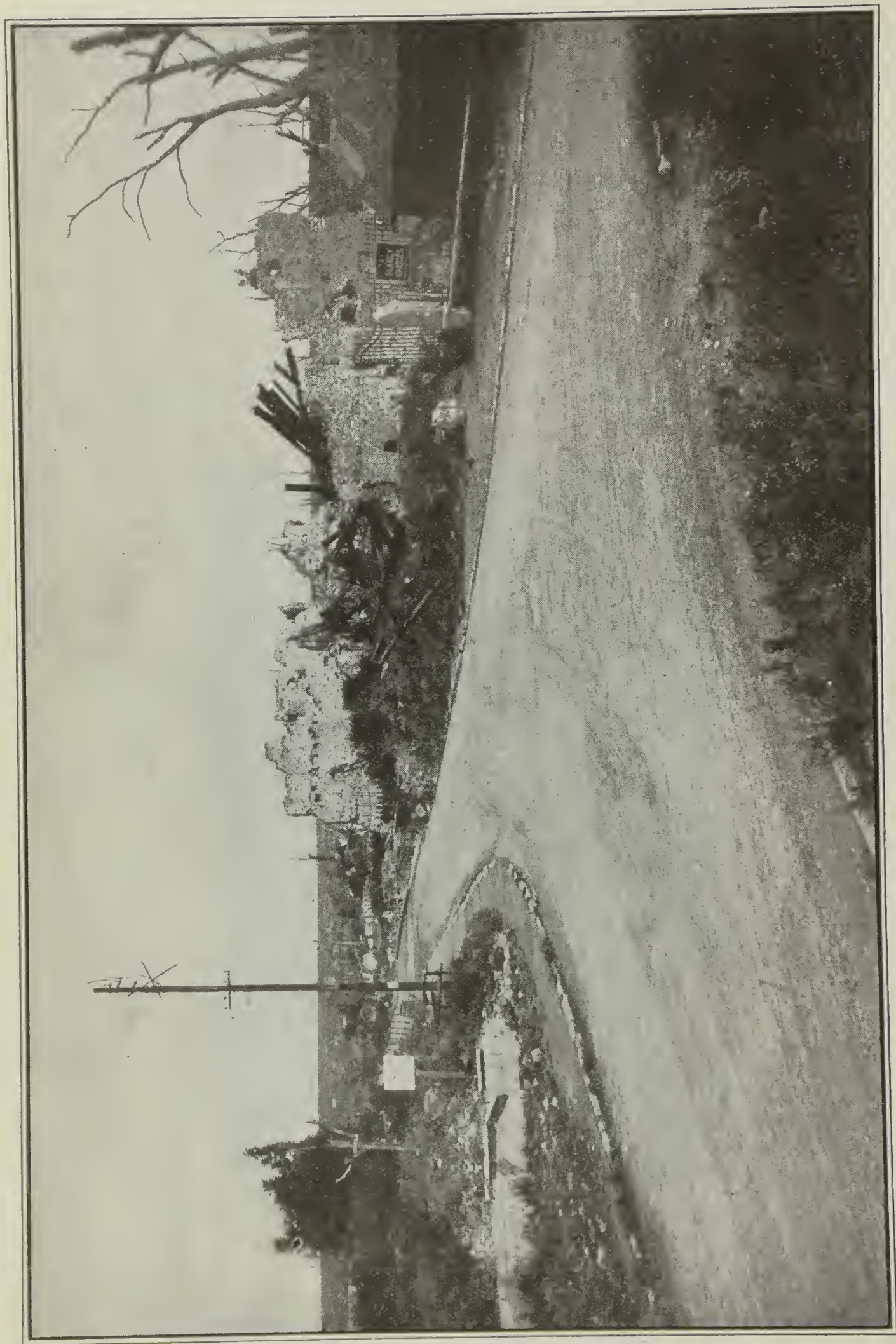
The Wood seemed a haunt for crows, as hundreds were circling it, but when we got there we found it a shelter for rabbits. Scores of them were about, and in among the tangles were old shell craters, old saps, and machine-gun posts. There are many signs of war. One of the inhabitants who was slopping through the mud with a sack of grain on his back told me they had dug up more dead in the fields about Oppy than in any of its neighboring villages, and he mentioned an inquisitive English tourist who was out a few years ago and who probed about all battlefields. The good man saw bones, even skulls, peeping from the brush of the Wood. Horrified, he got his taxi driver to take him back to Arras to demand an investigation. It was a short one. The bones and skulls had originally belonged to sheep, and a careless butcher had taken an easy way of getting rid of them.

Standing there in Oppy fields, great expanses of soft mud sown with winter wheat and newly harrowed, and with all the villages separated, it is hard to understand why the fighting in that locality was always fierce. Perhaps it is because two old sunken roads afforded good cover for raiding parties and attacks. One can come from Bailleul-sire-

Berthoult without being much exposed. Many men did come that way.

Oppy was a strong part of the German reserve line until April 9, 1917, and during the time Jerry was there he occupied the railway cutting outside Bailleul and constructed an elaborate dugout system half its length. Electric lighting was installed, and the cellars were stocked with choice wines. Even ladies were invited to the place, and when the hard-boiled Canucks took possession they found a wealth of dainty feminine garments. One apartment was richly furnished even to a grand piano, probably the headquarters of a corps commander. The bridge over the cutting was never destroyed, and countless troops used it in wartime. Searching the place, I found only a few signs of old dugout entrances, but shrapnel scars are visible on the bridge.

GAVRELLE is the next village along the road. It is as noted in a way as Oppy, but is not so sloppy. War ground abounds there, old craters and bits of trenches, but the farmers are gradually clearing away all traces. It is a town of old women. I counted sixteen in sight at doorways, in gardens, and on the road. The memorial is quite elaborate, and so is a shrine at a corner. They have a very grand Mairie and several fine houses. On the whole, it seems a most wide-awake village and enterprising. Many advertisements were on walls and fences, and everyone seemed busy. Near by, a threshing outfit was working in the open in true Western Canadian style, with the exception that the bands of the sheaves had to be cut by hand. A red-faced woman, strongly built as a man, stood on the thresher and adroitly caught the sheaves and slashed the bind-



Thousands of C. E. F. veterans will remember the old Blangy corner and the bridges. This is what it looked like in 1918.

ing. She used a huge-bladed knife in a way that would surprise a Gurkha.

The trenches that are still traceable were the German ones that ran from Oppy. We wandered around them, and chased a red weasel over the grass. The artillery used to strafe those trenches all the time, and one day the machine guns assisted and were shooting short. It is on record that a certain subaltern at once wired to Captain Stephen of the 50th Battalion and asked what he should do as he was in the front line trench. He received one word in reply: "Duck."

After leaving Gavrelle we crossed an open tract of wide fenceless fields, barren of living creatures. It was utterly forlorn. Only brown hawks and crows were stirring. No pigeons even were in that territory, and not a car passed or met us on the road. It is the most lonesome section I have encountered in France. Then we came to a demarcation stone, and shortly afterward, three big gun pits were sudden reminders of war. The Scottish Division memorial was the next object to break the landscape, and it is most unique, built of big rough stones, each stone bearing the name of a battalion. The stone tower is a sturdy Scottish erection and the corner stones have the Scottish thistle carved on them.

Pont du Jour Cemetery is next, then the village of Athies is close by on the left. Then comes Blangy and the Feuchy area.

THEY used to call the Feuchy area the "Belgian zone" in wartime, for there were flooded grounds that old Heinie could not cross, and the main item in the day's routine was the matter of keeping under cover. Both sides played a hide-and-seek game among old cellars and trenches, and neither party was ever quite sure where the other was established. All old soldiers remember the Blangy corner, where signs cautioned against heavy loads on the Blangy bridge. It is a very different corner today. The signs have gone and a unique church of concrete overlooks it, with a hall alongside that serves for dancing and other recreations.

Blangy Château is rebuilt and looks prosperous, and the flour mill is busy.

The taxi driver I had for the day informed me that a few years ago he had a German officer as a customer. The German had his bride with him, and was anxious to show her a home in Blangy beside the château. The driver took them there, and to his amazement the French housewife greeted the officer like a long-lost son, and kissed the bride and took both in for refreshments. It was very evident that the German had stayed at the home in war days, and had conducted himself as a gentleman.

All this Feuchy area, Blangy and its bridge and hollows, were well known to the 1st Brigade. Each battalion had its turn in the line, in support and in reserve, during the spring of 1918.

Go around the corner to the right, travelling away from Arras, and you see a new château, not a rebuilt one. There are a few huts and many market gardens, then another château that is rebuilt and which has splendid grounds, lawns and flower plots and fine walks under the trees. Then we come to the old railway bridge with the army legend in big black letters, "What Have You Saved Today?"

There are many old dugout entrances to be traced along the embankment, and the ruins of a recently shattered pill-box are piled there. On the other side of the embankment there is a sort of opening, and workers near it told me that the French used it as an entrance to the underground beneath the embankment, which they had to fill in with concrete and stone in order to prevent the roadbed from further sinking. Along that stretch the embankment has become a track worthy of a roller coaster at an amusement park.

Athies is built of new brick. You see very few huts, and the temporary buildings erected just after the war are squat brick houses with whitewashed walls. Only a few of them remain. There is a pretty villa, then a cemetery, two Nissen huts, and a brick church with a stalwart rooster on the spire. The memorial looks very new, and then you are crossing the level to where the Griffith flour mills are operating as they did in pre-war days. It is all low ground about the canal and the railway embankment is high.



Even thirteen years after, there's still an argument as to why the Château de la Haie was never shelled during the war.



The Grande Place at Wailly is even muddier than it used to be.

Keep on, soon you are in Feuchy, the finest town in many respects in the entire Arras area. It has a town planner, and his work is in evidence. There are no two homes alike in the village—such a contrast from other places—and no rough brickwork is permitted. The streets are wide and clean. The big estaminet on the corner is a fine roomy one with a very fancy front, and across the Little Place is the British cemetery. It is in a sort of corner and on high ground, and the gardener told me that an enormous German dugout was under the very entrance and required a great deal of filling in. Even now, thirteen years after, you can find seven places near the village where the land is caving in because of old underground tunnels.

The memorial is very nice, in a clean area before the Mairie, which is a very fine building, quite the best of its kind in any village in Pas-de-Calais. There is much low ground in the rear, a boggy area of tall grass, and with many tall trees about. All along the street the homes are of different design, with nice gateways, walks and quaint corners. Feuchy people are very proud of their village.

Going on to Fampoux, you see many old rough corners that tell of trenches and dugout entrances, and on the right the tall trees are mirrored in long stretches of water. The 2nd Battalion had many rough hours in the trenches at Fampoux, and could no doubt identify many of the old dugouts. If you go beyond the village you will see more ponds, and many wild duck will rise at your approach.

MONCHY in on the skyline, as if it were on a mountain, and the canal becomes a wide thread of silver. Fampoux has many good houses, of good size and with nice fronts and gardens. Many have whitewashed walls or painted concrete decorations, but clustered stacks very near the village do not help the picture. Here and there are cellars and old wall ends, and down in the valley you see four old walls standing desolate, with an old emplacement in the rear.

We turned right at the Gavrelle road and went past a pretty concrete home and on to a fine station with "Roeux Pas de Calais" painted across it in large

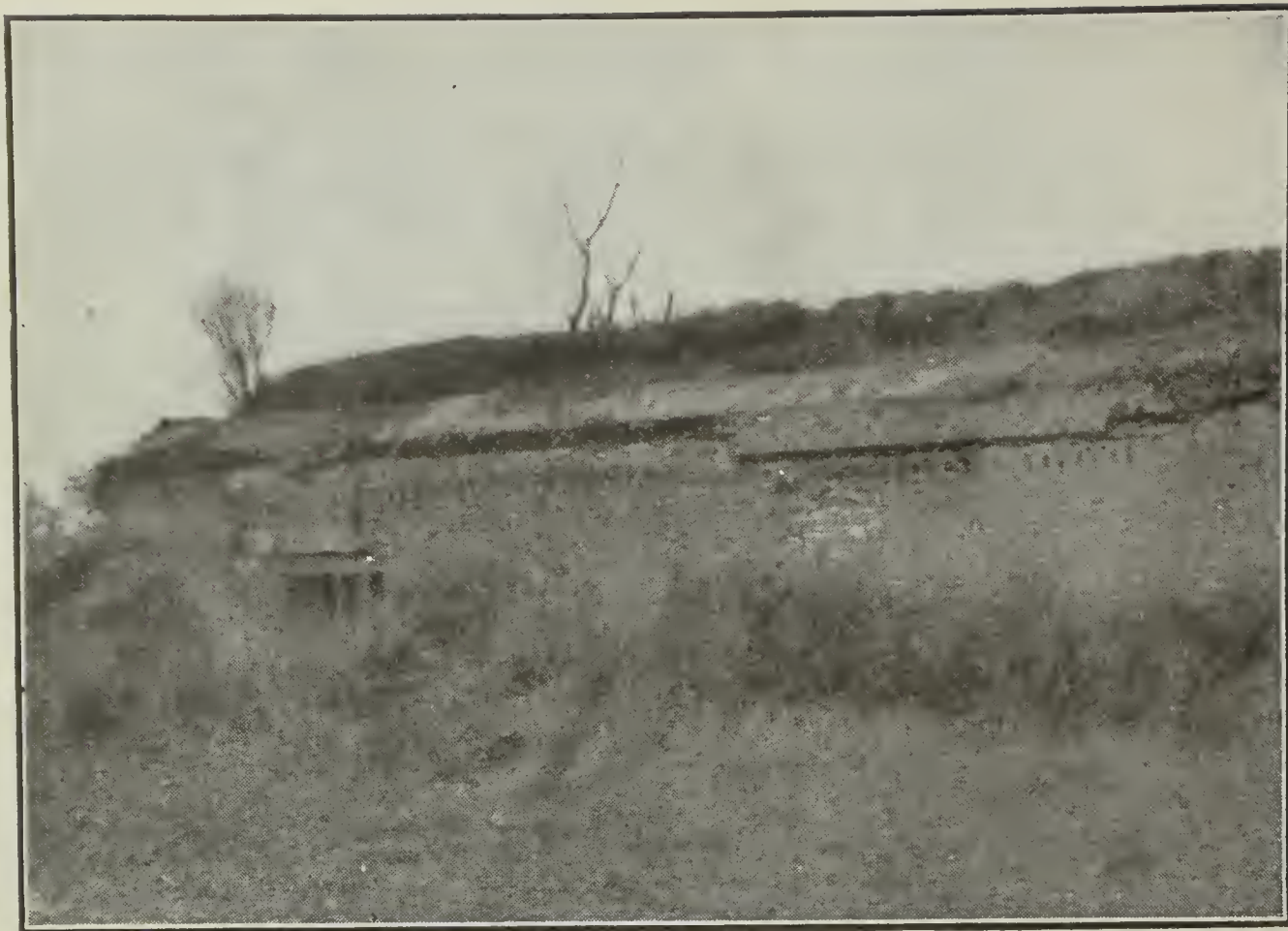
letters. A barrier prevents you crossing the railway and if you cannot read French you will wait a long time for the gateman to raise it. For the barrier is down all the time and a sign tells you to press a button and ring the bell if you want to cross over.

After a short wait the gate went up, and we crossed over into Roeux, a long village, with the ruins of the old chemical works an eyesore on the left. There are many other ruins about, and on the right a huge mass blocks the view. On the right-hand side it is all smooth concrete, but on the left side it looks like an old brick wall. It is an enormous pill-box, with large chambers inside and smooth concrete floors, and was used as a storage for bodies when the burial parties cleared that area. It is too large to be blown up and will likely remain there for many years. There is nothing of interest in the village, the buildings being very ordinary and the streets very dirty.

We crossed over by way of Tilloy-lez-Mofflaines—known only as Tilloy by the soldiers—with its memorial as a feature, and went through Beaurains, with its fragments of old walls and cellars and trenches; then passed the old Telegraph Hill sector.

We reached Achicourt, with many old white walls and many army huts and ruins, a strange conglomeration. The first hut is a long roomy one, and was used as a church for the first years. There is a communal cemetery with old walls, and other walls near by that once surrounded homes, and wall ends with shrapnel marks, then a concrete water tower overlooking the village. On a house there is an old army sign, Leeds Road, then there is the usual shop, one that you find in all the region round about. These shops seem to be the grocerias of France.

The church is an odd affair with a squat appearance, a tower like a barn ventilator, and many sharp points like upturned shells. It is painted white and surrounded by a fence of white rails and posts. There is another church, an unusual structure, and I was informed that it is a Protestant one and gathers its congregation from the British gardeners. The Hôtel de Ville and Postes are



This immense concrete and brick pillbox still stands on the outskirts of Rœux.



The same old sign, the same old buildings and the same old smells—Dainville station as it is today.

fine buildings, a credit to the village. There are many market gardens, and long old houses with white walls. In the archways you can find soldiers' names galore, British and Canadian, and in one place some fed-up artist has inscribed: "No wonder they call them frogs; this is all a blasted swamp and it rains every day."

At a café on the right as we left the village, we found the proprietor the warmest friend of the British of any Frenchmen I have met. He liked nothing better than to talk about the way Britain had saved the situation, and he said he had countless friends among both officers and soldiers. He cannot speak English, yet has a flock of post-cards and Christmas cards received from England, and many badges and other souvenirs. On the left there is a lovely villa in a most exquisite setting, back from the road under tall trees and with lawns and shrubbery about it.

WE WENT left and into Agny, and saw a great many ruins. New houses are like strangers among the old ones with their ancient white walls, and the ruins are pitiful. On a corner are old gate posts, and a rubble heap behind them. One ruin has only the stone steps that led to the house. A big cellar yawns behind them. Three wooden huts in a row, another collection of ruins, and we are on the way to Wailly.

In a field the old brick factory has little left. Across the road is a mound of powdered brick and one old corner of the building. On the right another ruin stands solitary, exposing a big shell hole in the end, and without a tile on its rafters. Beyond it, like a sentinel, is a remnant of the old chimney. In the valley on the left are some fine old farms, set well in from the road, with long walls ending in small towers and with tall trees as sheltering arms.

Wailly has not cleared its Grande Place, but left it muddy. The school is a nice building and modern, and there is a new bridge. The old ruins of the other bridge remain exactly as they were, and in the river the inhabitants get immense quantities of cress for the restaurants and hotels of Arras. One old ruin still shows in the line of houses along the

square. Make the old hairpin turn around the bridge and you find more ruins as you go into the sunken road that leads to Dainville.

In the open we saw many gunners after rabbits, and then the old station with its huge lettering looks much the same as in war days. Dainville itself is a picture, the prettiest in all that sector. From the hill you see nothing but white walls and dark-red roofs. Long walls and old house sides are all painted white, and the narrow streets make them all seem grouped. It is a clean village, and there are many flowers in the windows and clean curtains, and the quaint alleys and passages are just as intriguing as when we were there in the old days.

It was there that the "Apache," as we called him, Dave Hamel, performed many of his stunts. He could speak fluent French and poor English. He claimed to be an Irishman, born in Cornwall, Ontario, but was more likely from the slums of Montreal. He had a strong dislike of work, and nimble wits that enabled him to avoid his turns on various carrying parties. Also, he had a fund of humor that made us tolerate his other shortcomings. Our officer seemed in nervous dread whenever Hamel was around as he never knew what the fellow would do next. It was Hamel who, one dirty night up in Cow Trench, asked what loads we were carrying. "Toffee apples," came the answer. "Then," said Hamel, "I wish I had drawn a grape."

The old white house at the upper end of Dainville had been freshly painted and gleamed very white as we stopped to look at the little grotto and its saint. Just beyond is "Strawberry Villa," the home of an Irishman who liked Dainville so well that he settled there after the war. Then there are the two wooden huts that were there in '18, and soon you are out under the trees and through a field fringed with many stacks.

Next is the passage under the railway, famous with us as the spot where Hamel used to entertain his lady-love, "Goldilocks," on rainy nights. There are more big trees, and numberless crows about the grain fields, then you are at Warlus, with the old white house on the corner jutting out as if it would bar the way.

Straight ahead is the big gate that opens into the château grounds. Turn right and you are in the Grande Place, and it is a grand place. Just before it the houses seem centuries old, with stone walls painted white and low roofs and wide doors with enormous latches and a café with old iron hitching rails outside. The square is filled with fine large trees, and the Mairie is there like a grand château, the only discordant feature being a water tank close beside it. At the ancient waterhole a small boy shivered as he attended a pony which stood in the water, probably doing time there as some remedy for hoof trouble. Old houses border the way as you go on and finally emerge into a wide open, where magpies flee from your path and more crows rise in clouds.

IT IS a wide open stretch that leads at last down into Agnez and Duisans. The approach to the village is hedged with stacks, almost hiding the communal cemetery. Downhill over cobbles and the old church confronts you. Workers are making some repairs. In the old square in front of it there is a fenced-in yard filled with stone and workmen. On the right, where the old "Y" hut still lodges, there is a memorial around on the under side of the hill.

It is a quaint old village, and two very large farms enhance the setting. One has a small bell on the roof corner as if at times it were used as a chapel. The second farm is an immense square of high walls with the name of the village inscribed in army lettering. There is a hut or so, then the two fine châteaux once headquarters for many officers.

Go up a sunken road overhung by tall trees, past a new villa, over a bridge and railway, and you are in Etrun. Etrun is an old, narrow village with many white walls. Army signs are everywhere. There is a factory to the right and the crows hover very near. Through an opening among the small houses you get a vista of manure heaps and women active in spreading the fertilizer. The streets are crooked and quaint. We go over the brook and uphill over bumpy cobbles until we see a Nissen hut close by houses that have dates 1841, 1854 and 1867 proudly displayed.

There, at the house bearing a sign "Gueant-Voisin, Debitant," we find a good madame who has a host of soldier friends. She has an album full of postcards received from lads she knew, photographs of many, badges, tokens of all kinds. She has a Black Watch banner, and numbers over twenty acquaintances belonging to that regiment. To her, a kilt is a sign of army perfection.

We went on along a pretty road with a brook on our left, crossed by occasional foot bridges and with a high bank on the right. Soon we reached a wood wired for rabbits, and then we were at Bray, a small, ancient place, with the brook curving about it and high banks all around, a village of narrow lanes and stone houses of an age you cannot reckon. There are only two new houses in the place, and not a trace of Bray Camp.

We went along the winding road to a big old square of white walls that bears an inscription Halte Repas. There is an army sign on the walls as well, "G.B.D. 5," whatever that means. It was there that we used to see many officers, always mounted, coming and going.

Acq is the next stop, and soon we find the old yard where various drafts used to be assembled before being marched to St. Eloi and told what was expected of them, what a privilege was theirs to be received by such a famous unit, and all such piffle, falling always on ears already deafened by the ditties of the bullring at Le Havre.

Acq is another quaint old place. There you could usually buy French bread. I'll never forget the night that Genge and I went there to buy a loaf and were told that madame had none. Our hopes were dashed, as rations that reached the huts of Mont St. Eloi made just one meal per day; and jam and chocolate, the sum total of canteen edibles, did not fill our needs. But madame asked timidly if white bread would do. White bread! We gasped and clung to each other as she toddled out with two loaves of excellent army issue. We bought them and said nothing because many times afterward we had like favors, but there was nothing to prevent our minds from dwelling on certain quartermaster-captains and their crews and the means they used to procure liquid refreshment.



Who went to school at Ferfay? The old Château which housed the Third Division "University."

CHAPTER XI

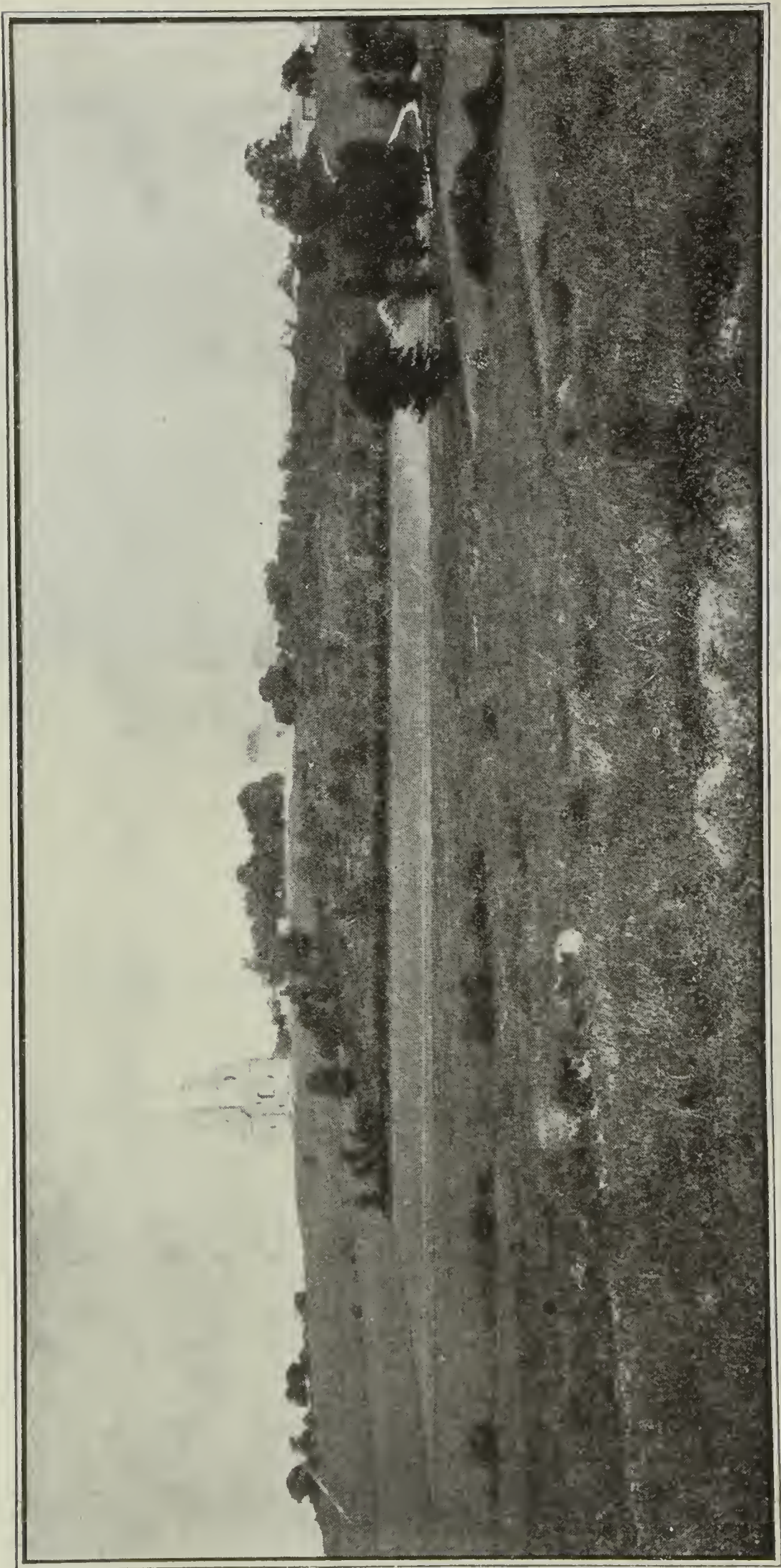
AN OLD BILLETING AREA

KISSING plays a big part in the life of France. They say there is a big thrill in a French girl's embrace, but from what I've witnessed I don't think one would encore such a performance with the male, especially if he be a weathered rustic with wiry mustaches. At any rate, I resisted most strenuously the advances of an excited farmer at Villers au Bois. There he was in the old Tabac shop, looking the same as he did when last I saw him in '18, when I had given him a sack of tobacco and said good-bye. We always called him the "General," and the title seemed to please him, and he was always ready to aid us in any way, to get us hot water for shaving, eggs and chips, French bread, which we were forbidden to buy, and anything else we wanted. I called his name when

I saw him and shook his hand till he remembered me, and then I had to go on the defensive. The General was overjoyed. He almost wept. He rattled out names of boys I've never seen since '19, talked of old times we had in his barn on our chicken-wire bunks, of the trip wire we set for an officer and dozens of other things. And all the while he wanted to buy me drinks. It was difficult to escape him an hour later.

It's the same in all the old billeting area back of Vimy. You are home again if you were there in war time. The people greet you as warmly as if you were one of their own, and on every hand you face reminders of those great days. It's different from any other area.

To me it's the prettiest part of France I know. There are all kinds of villages



Mont St. Eloi—the most Canadian village in France—is still the outstanding landmark behind Vimy Ridge.

and every kind of scenery, but I've not seen anything to equal the vista as you go down into Gauchin-Legal or look back from the hills near Houdain. And it's a territory where you find all as it was before. You see the old trenches at Vimy, the tunnels and old dugouts, but those bring different memories. In the old billeting area you see the houses and old yards and barns and gardens and, yes, even the middens, as they were; the same old clock and pictures and crockery in the estaminets, the same old madames to hand you a glass of beer, more wrinkled now and fatter but just as kind as ever. And on the walls of the homes and in the barns you find hundreds of names, carved and written, of boys long since buried along the lines or vanished since the war. And in every home, in every village, memory brings back to you different pictures and different stories. Here it was that good old sergeant . . . Remember the night the C. M. R. officer . . . ?

YOU leave Arras by way of Anzin with its straggling houses, past Nissen huts and a French memorial, and out into the open where many old stubs are still standing with shrapnel still buried in them. Dugout entrances are along the bank on the left, but grain stacks dot the fields which the trenches crossed. The café at the crossroads is restored, and there's a wide open field where the aerodrome used to be.

We went down the hill toward Mont St. Eloi, the old towers seeming exactly as they were in war time and the side hill with its grassy shelves strangely vacant. Those "steps" on the hill were filled with huts when last I saw them, and there we nearly froze to death during the winter of '16-'17. We turned down into Ecoivres, past the cemetery and around the old walls into the village.

There's not a new brick that I could see, or an additional one fallen down. The old château looks as grim and grey as if it still contained staff officers, and the backyards are as dirty as in war time. Just where the water tank used to be there are signs still on the wall. "Railway Rd." "All Waste Lengthens The War." "What Have You Salvaged Today?" "To Mont St. Eloi."

An old farmer came out as we stood there and soon we were invited in for coffee, and his old wife cackled with tales of the bons soldats who came to her to buy bread. A military police had been stationed near the water tank to see that no one tampered with it and to spot Canadians from Mont St. Eloi who bought bread from the farmers. He got "bombed" one night with frozen turnips, and then a shell came over and blew him against the stone wall.

The small railway bed is still there, and the shell crater is by the corner. Farther over, the ruins of the barn that was partly destroyed are just as they were. Five Imperial soldiers were killed by the shelling that wrecked it, and five horses were found dead in the ruins. The town major never stayed at the château. He was "windy" and feared that Fritz might register on such a target, so he moved to a little house at the end of the village. Madame there remembered him well, as she is sure there are still a number of francs due her.

We went into the "store" where it was always possible to pay double for anything you wanted, and the same old girl came to serve us. We chatted with her and asked the price of her chocolate and matches now, and we could see that she understood our meaning. They profited in that store and in another estaminet until a canteen was established in the village.

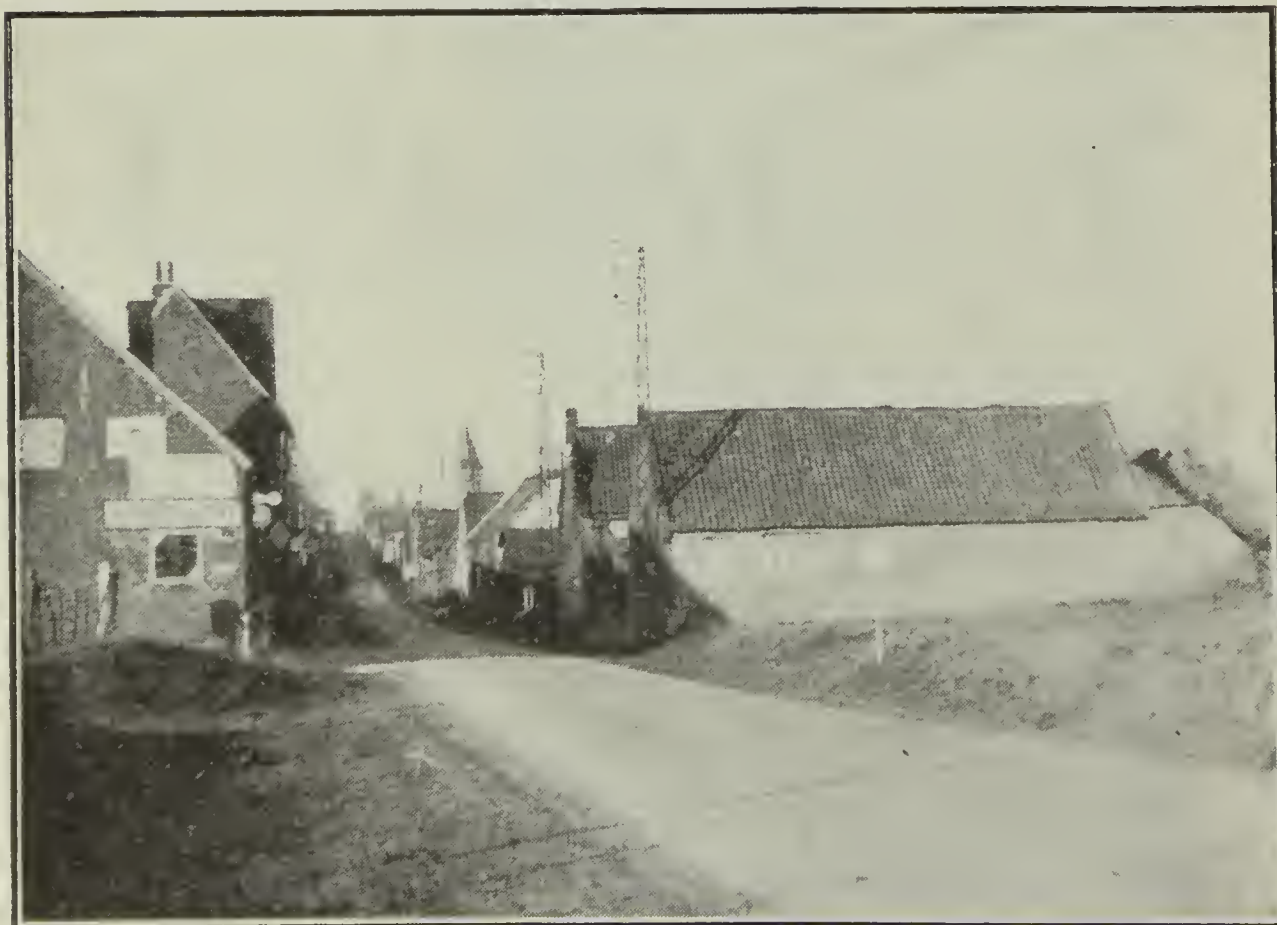
We couldn't get into the château, but I remember the Imperials there on working parties, digging second cellars, bombproof places, for the officers billeted there.

The farmer was proud as he told us that the water across the road tested the best in that locality, and how the three motors they installed could not pump the spring dry. All the old posts and concrete foundations of the water station are still there "A La Source Haitecour Peugeot." The sign is still over the door.

We went into the estaminet and asked madame if she remembered the night we had a birthday party for the "girl" of the house. Mademoiselle didn't belong there and she wasn't as young as she used to be, but we had the party just the



There has been little change at once popular Camblain l'Abbé.



Estree-Cauchy, too, is very much the sleepy (?) place it used to be.

same, for one of the boys had a cake in a parcel and why shouldn't there be a party? Incredible, the old sweats will say, that any boy ever donated a cake from his parcel. Yes, but there'd been a bottle of some mysterious louse chaser in the parcel not corked tightly enough, and the cake had a strange flavor. There were no evil after effects from it, however, the two who got sick had mixed beer and vin blanc. On the wall, beside the old church, war lettering catches the eyes of all who go by. "It Is The Duty Of Every Man To Save As Much As He Is Able."

We went up the steep little hill to Mont St. Eloi. Many a night we had blundered home in the dark to our huts on the hillside. Just at the St. Eloi road there used to be a platform, for watering carts I think, and there one could see plainly the Very lights rising and falling at Vimy.

We went to visit the doctor. He was as courteous as ever, and glad to talk of the Canadians. One of his daughters is married to an English major and living in England. He told us of the staff officers who used his home as a billet, of the airmen who came to visit in the evenings, of the sick lads who had been given No. 9's and "duty," and had come to him, suffering from real ailments. He had his opinions of many of those who had filled medical officer uniforms. Strangely, he said the most common complaint he had to handle was toothache, and he told us he had extracted a bushel of teeth for Canadian Tommies. He told us of a Canadian who married a girl of Ecoivres and took her home with him, and of some others who should have married girls there, at Mont St. Eloi and Villers au Bois. It is no unusual thing to hear a boy at the village schools called "Canada," or "Jimmy," or "Joe," as Canadians used the word. And in some of the back areas you see the browns of the Indians, black-hued boys where the African labor battalions were, and lads of yellow hue and funny eyes where the Chinks had their tents and billets.

Mont St. Eloi was adopted by Hamilton, Ontario, and every school child in the village knows it and will point out

the plaque to you that is in the Mairie at the top of the hill. Hamilton provided 102,000 francs for the poor of the village. The doctor has entertained noted persons. King George and the Prince of Wales have called on him, and the Prince of Wales went up to the old towers and tried to climb the wrong one. There is only one you can go up. And in May, '15, Marshal Petain was decorated, made a Commander of the Legion of Honor, in the doctor's parlor. There's a Nissen hut still in the doctor's garden, but he has filled in the trenches that were there. In his cellar you can see the huge timbers installed as reinforcements, and all the cables and wires left as they were when the signallers finally withdrew. It was their headquarters for a long, long time.

Seventeen civilians were killed at Mont St. Eloi, and twenty-five soldiers. We saw the white house that used to be the town major's billet, and a new brick front on the side of the home where the shell entered and killed Canadians while the Prince of Wales was in the village. Fressin Warnier. The sign is still up at the estaminet where they had the piano, and the officers always wanted possession and the girls could speak English. One of those girls married an English sergeant. The house where they sold silk handkerchiefs and aprons is exactly the same, with the same little bell to tinkle as you go in; and we went up the winding little street on the right to the little café where they used to sell beer at one franc per bottle, but you had to sit on the steps to drink it. There never was room enough inside.

I went to a house just off the main road where lived a lady whom I had almost forgotten. We knew her as "Hairy Legs," and she sometimes would sell us eggs and chips. One of our lads happened there one early morning in '18, when the village did quite a business in the way of refreshments and our good friend had omitted to don her stockings. Her legs were bowed, and so hairy as to be literally furred. Thereafter she had no other name with us, and soon forgot to resent it.

She stared at me blankly as I asked for coffee, then I mentioned the old



Things have smartened up a lot at Bouvigny since the Canadians left town.



Nearly all the old names are still over the store fronts at Bruay.

name. She smiled and gave us warm welcome, and said she had not heard the words in years. All the while she talked and said she wished the old days back again. On a wall is a card in English of which she is proud. It is marked "The Creed of a Lincoln Man," and reads: "Hear all and say naught. Sup all and pay naught. And if you do aught for naught, do it for yourself." Old Hairy Legs actually had tears in her eyes as we left, and followed us to the road to see us off.

In the wood below, where the railway troops used to be, there isn't a sign of their occupation, but up in the village there are Nissen huts that were put there after the war. We went over behind Berthonaval Farm, which is unchanged, and the Ridge seemed farther away than it did in war days. Berthonaval Wood is dark green and luxuriant; as pleasant, no doubt, in summer as ever it was.

On a first visit to Château de la Haie the girl at the porter's hut wouldn't let us enter the long driveway, but I went back later and secured permission from the old lady who is caretaker during the winter months to wander about and take pictures.

As the grounds are all shaded by tall trees, making time exposures necessary, I was not enthused as regards pictures, but it was great to walk again in those glades and open spaces to the rear where we had the various huts that were called "camps."

Not a trace of them remains; the grounds are again in perfect condition. The old lady told me that the owner, when she is there in summer, delights in having visitors, and that many come. Often there are Canadian officers and others, and always they take pictures, and madame "so likes to be in the photo she has put herself in hundreds." The old lady told us that madame had more than fifty pictures of the château, taken at various angles, and that she was in every one. It was there in those old grounds that Heinie sometimes tried to bomb us, and the trees gave little shelter. I remember one day that a newcomer was standing about near, I think, Vancouver Camp, when Heinie was over.

The lad was very slender in build, with thin legs. His shoulders widened a trifle, and then he had a large head with a mushroom sort of top. The steel hat he wore was of enormous size, and as he paused there in the open in perfect bewilderment one of the crusty veteran sergeants stood there. "That's it," he barked, "just stop a bit. If one of them ruddy things 'its you it'll only drive you in the ground like a blinkin' carp^ot tack."

VILLERS AU BOIS was quite the dirtiest little place we saw that day, but it brought back a flood of memories. I suppose there were officers who considered it a horrible place, and many soldiers who had similar thoughts, but they were not of the cult who did six on and six off in the crater posts, and went down to sleep or shiver in clammy, dripping dugouts, with no warm food to put inside them, no chance for dry socks for their feet, or hope of anything but a return to the miserable half-frozen mud they had just quitted. To them, days there were long black and white dominos that you placed end to end, and a village like Villers au Bois was a glimpse of heaven itself when you got there for a six-day spell and could sit beside a stove in the kitchen and toast yourself till you were thawed once more and dare look at your feet. It was, and is, a third-rate little place with dirty, narrow winding streets, and huge walls jumping in front of you, and barns opening on the street, the whole an awful jumble without sanitation or system, but it was a perfect home to us when we came back from Vimy. Our names are yet on the old barn timbers, and the old chap in the Tabac shop was but one of those for whom we had a name and who carries with him the kindest of recollections. There were pay parades and bath parades, and visits to various canteens, waiting in long queues to spend five francs with the thrift of a market woman, each a part and picture of the mosaic of life behind the lines, but none of those bits stand out more vividly than nights by the stoves of Villers au Bois with eggs and chips on the table and monsieur smoking Canadian tobacco beside you.

The people of Villers au Bois had to leave in '14, but they returned in '16 and stayed the rest of the time. "We never were afraid while the Canadians were at Vimy," they said, and they meant it. The little Tabac home is where the town major slept, and he was usually a decent fellow, never objecting to the hilarity that prevailed on evenings after we were paid. The stout, black-mustached proprietor told me that he had ten boys who could either sing or play some instrument, and they used to gather nightly and entertain his customers for the price of a few beers. He still has a Maple Leaf match box that one of them gave him, and a number of small flags that came with war-time tobacco. Outside his shop are signs telling the distance to Hersin and Servins, and a cemetery signboard, and on the wall behind is another war painting: "Mont St. Eloi. No Lorries."

We went along to the barn where last I stayed, and found old braces that had helped support our chicken-wire bunks. There was the old spike in a beam on which Ted Bamber caught his shirt—stout army issue—and could not get up or down. It was in that same barn that an R. C. R. officer came enquiring directions. It was pitch black, but he had fumbled his way inside, was half-drunk and had no matches. In the dark many voices offered suggestions, they passed to personal remarks, and we were all threatened with arrest. It quieted at last when he fumbled his way outside again—only to return half an hour later, in a worse condition than before. The hilarity that ensued was enough to lift the roof, but at last some hero got out of his bunk, got into his boots and led the poor chap back down the road to his billet.

It was at Villers au Bois, too, that the boys caught a goat and tied its legs together and stowed it in the bed of the quarter bloke who always went home drunk. He slept that night in the barn across the way, and the goat had the bed to itself.

There, also, we were once ordered to be in bed, lights out and no noise, at nine-thirty each p. m. It was all for the good of the troops, of course, but no one could understand how the officers could yell and sing and have gay times till one o'clock in the morning. The sergeant-major came around carrying his authority on his shoulder, and we all got between the blankets—two of them, and your ground sheet made your bed—and all lights were out.

Softly, about 10 p. m., rose the sweet notes of the battalion tenor, singing "Bonnie Mary of Argyle." If there is an officer of the 42nd who never heard that song, ask for his regimental record. It continued, that song, and others, and then came opposition. Unholy strains came from the barn, where the men were supposed to have been snoring since nine-thirty. An officer came to still the harmony. He had dined well and had difficulties in navigation, and the source of the music was baffling. It seemed in the air, as if having no particular source. For a half hour he waited to hear it again, for it had died wheezily, and as soon as he had gone it was repeated. Four times he returned, each time more mystified, until he got his revolver and the sergeant had to take it from him. And all the while, by the corner beam, was a long rope that raised and lowered the tinny old phonograph we had salvaged at Camblain l'Abbé.

CHAPTER XII

A MADAME WHO REMEMBERS

WE WENT back to the Mont St. Eloi road and on toward Camblain l'Abbé. On the right, the wood has grown young trees to cover the old sawmill sites, and all is changed. It was over that wood that the red German plane used to come to drop bombs. On the left there were a few rough mounds where the ammunition dumps used to be, then we passed the château on the right where there were always officers, and the wood across the way which was always full of huts. Now château and wood look deserted, and only the café on the left is as it was. Along the road the big old trees have been cut down, changing the aspect completely.

When you went to Camblain l'Abbé you needed to wear your belt and have your shoulder loose-jointed, for always you had to salute innumerable officers, the ones who really counted. The château grounds were full of them, and red tabs glistened everywhere. Many gallant old boys fought brave battles in that Château, and won breast-loads of decorations.

You could always get eggs and chips in the village, but it was hard to buy French bread, and nearly every place would sell drink at any hour.

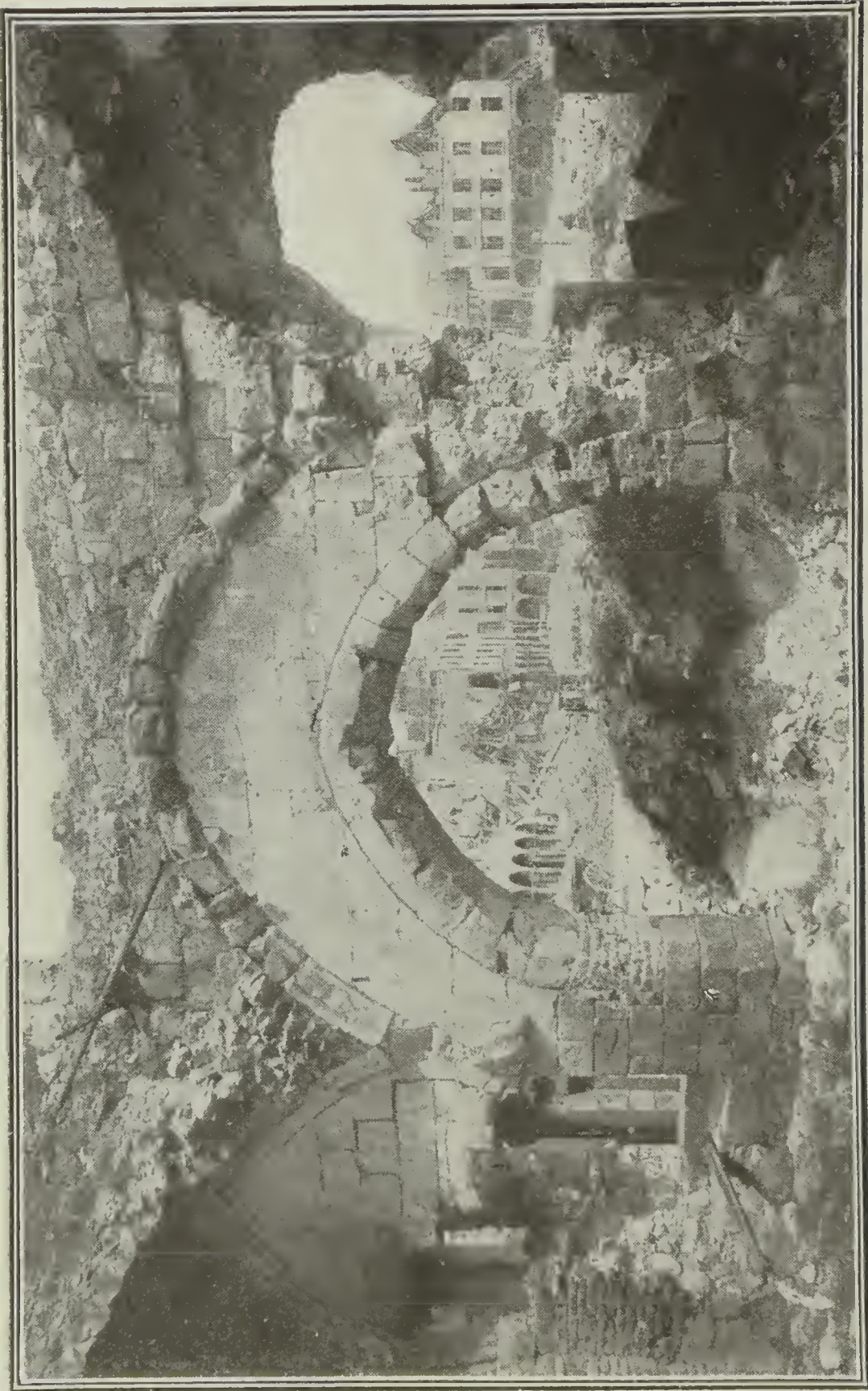
We went into the estaminet that used to house officers, and the same old madame met us. She has run that café for forty-one years, and is as bright as a youngster. Her sabots clattered briskly over the tiles as she came to wait on us. We asked her questions and she was delighted to give information. Yes, she had officers upstairs in her house for almost a year, and the cook kitchen was in her back garden. Oh, yes, the police were always about, for an aerodrome was near, and in the château the

officers she had were afraid of the bigger shells. Oo, la-la, but it was a game. They stayed hours on end talking and playing cards, and they went to St. Pol and other places for a day or two of leave. A fine time they had, the officers. There was one who would get drunk and go to sleep, then get up and walk about. Twice he had fallen down the stairs. The old lady had resented some of her neighbors. They had not all played fair, she said, but had sold liquor at all hours and at all prices. She was honest, la-lala!

On the side of the road there is a cross in memory of a French soldier, and they used to say that he was a lad of sixteen who fell out, exhausted, on a march to Vimy and was shot there by his officer.

We went by the crossroads, always called the "Four Winds," and on to Cambligneul on the left. It's another quaint old village with walls newly whitened, not so cramped a place as Villers au Bois. In the estaminet there a man showed me a Black Watch badge he treasured, and he told of an old lady in the village who is still keeping eleven francs and a photo for a 13th boy who went up the line and never returned. He left no address and so she keeps them faithfully, and will not believe that he was killed.

Estree-Cauchie (Extra-Cushy) was our next stop, and the little village is just the same as it looked in '18. We talked with the garage man, first on the left, and he told us he had had a garage there for twenty-five years, and was hoping to get the prize as the first one in Pas-de-Calais. All along the people were friendly, most eager to talk of boys who billeted with them. We saw a collection of sixty-two badges, nearly all Canadian ones, framed neatly and hung



The Grande Place, Arras, as it was toward the close of the war.

on the wall. And at another home they prize a whittled gun, carved by some gunner who was clever with a knife. There are billet signs still on the walls in Estree-Cauchie. "3 Officers." "6 O. R." "6 horses." And on the long white walls numberless names and initials are carved or written. It is a quaint old place, with little lanes leading between the houses into green spaces under big trees, and out back in those places there are neat hedges and gardens and little sheds with tools piled in the corners, and the old house roofs, mossed green, slope down until you can reach them. At one arched way into a farm a canteen used to function, but all trace of its position is gone.

An old man there wanted to know about the horses of Canada, were they good stock? He had seen six hitched to an empty G. S. wagon and barely able to haul it. But that was the spring of '17, when there were no rations at times for man or beast up in the fighting areas. A gunner told me that he saw ten horses unable to pull an empty wagon past Le Targette, and that ten men drew the wagon to where it should go. The horses were racks of bones, hardly able to stand, and his battery saw thirty shot near where they were stationed.

OVER the hill from Estree-Cauchie you have one of the finest views in France. Green-wooded hills are on the right like the prettier parts of Canada, and a winding road leads down to a valley of enchantment. An old farm is down on the left, surrounded by a moat that gleams like a ring of silver. And the village that winds in and out, curves around the bottom of the hill and wanders out under grand old trees, is like a picture from fairy land. Reds and greens and browns and whites mix with the roofs and walls as if an artist had splashed the colors. The houses are extremely quaint, and a brown rooster on a white wall, shaking a bright red comb, is the final touch needed. Old men and women are out at their gates as soon as strangers are sighted, and they all want to talk at once when they hear the word "Canada."

Down at the bottom of the hill little paths straggle off under the trees to

small stone-walled cottages that hardly seem real. Gauchin-Legal, if it could be framed, would be a masterpiece. "2 Officers, 2 N C. O's." The billet signs are still in place, and there, too, you may find badges in the homes, books from Canada, and old magazines still treasured as Canadian relics, and they tell you all the same tales of joyous times back of the lines, gay songs and pranks, all without harm. You cross a stone bridge just fitted to the picture, go past the old Mairie and many hedge-rows. Two little whitewashed cottages are under immense trees on the right, as if sheltered from all wind and storm. A brook goes across the hollow in a series of deep pools, and there are flocks of crows and black and white cattle feeding.

An upgrade, and you pass some large buildings on the right, twist around a quaint street, up and up and up. There's a church perched on the high side, and long lines of white clothes flapping in the breeze, and then long stone walls. You are at Rebreuve, and you pass the château with fine grounds that was an army headquarters in the old days. We stopped beside the road to look into a field, and counted seventeen rabbits within one hundred yards. They were feeding, keeping near their burrows, and in the distance we could see dozens more. We passed a house covered with vines in English fashion, then another church on the hill. It is a land of hills and valleys and winding roads. Old houses with mud walls are there, mud mixed with straw and reinforced by timbers, and the streets are rough cobbled. On the left the view is wonderful, villages and valleys and white walls and green squares, trees in long lines and red roofs. A bare field shows where the aerodrome used to be, and you see, away in the distance, Narest, a solid block of red.

Bruay appears, another sea of red roofs and green ones. In the old triangle there is a French memorial, very dramatic and banked with fresh flowers. We went along the streets and looked at the shop fronts. There are few new names, and the only difference now is that there are many expensive boxes of chocolates



Ferfay. "It's exactly the same today."



And do you remember the old corner café at Lozingshem?

on display, embellished with red ribbon, and at the tea room one does not flounder over a batch of officers. The mine still reigns supreme in Bruay life. Miners were coming and going in the streets and coal carts are everywhere. We saw the baths to which we used to come from Divion, and which had girl attendants in those days.

Down the road to Divion, and we passed the long slope on which we waited in a snowstorm to be inspected by Sir Robert Borden. Shivering there a long hour, we waited, and when he came his first words were: "Boys, I'm going back to Canada . . ."

Divion has grown. There are many new houses and a few new shops. But all the old places are there. I saw the stable that No. 16 platoon set on fire, singeing all the hens, and the little house past the second corner where some of the company were routed to make room for officers. They slept in beds, while the men had to go into a stable still reeking of cows that had slept in it the previous night. It was so cold that the men couldn't sleep, so the next night they had a ladder reared to the roof of the place and a nimble-footed chap went up and with sandbags stuffed the flue. It wasn't ten minutes before the alarm was given. Madame rushed out, and all the officers, spitting, choking, gasping. Something was wrong, but what? They couldn't find a ladder, because it was down an old well, and so a batman was hoisted to the eaves. He did well for a yard or so, then slithered down again, knocking over those below like ninepins, and the frozen ground was hard. In the stable the snores were very loud as an indignant Sam Browner looked in. There were no tracks on frozen mud, so who could catch the culprit? And what smokes worse than coal the miners steal at Bruay? It was an all night affair, and if those poor officers had ever found out who did it, murder would have been done. But they don't know, not to this day.

We went to the café at Divion where one used to get a shave and a haircut in a barber-shop back room. Three razors they had, two pairs of scissors, and two shaving brushes. One barber was a one-

eyed veteran, another a consumptive unfit for the mines or army, and the third was the woman of the place, always carrying a nursing baby.

Then there was the old chap who sold shoe laces at two francs a pair, and to whom Earle Black and I sold a bag of socks for twenty francs. We showed him the top pair, new thick hose, and counted out the others, and how could he know that the ones doubled inside were full of holes and filthy, salvaged ones from an old dugout?

And there was the house where Paddy Flynn slept, who could never wear his false teeth. He always laid them beside his tunic pillow, and one night a rat stole them and went rattling down the wall with them, while Paddy's wails roused the whole house, and madame had difficulty in restraining him from demolishing the lower story.

Then the home at the other side of the village where the problem remained unsolved. "Pepper" and "Mustard" lived there, and never knew which was the husband of the home. There were two men, on alternate shifts, and as each came home madame stood him in a tub and scrubbed him clean, and they all slept in the same room. I got a picture of the old barn where the guard room was in the loft, and where we shook and shivered as the wind lashed through it. We stood sentry at the foot of a ladder, and an estaminet was near by. The boys backed two old girls in a beer-drinking contest the night the "preacher" went on guard. He was always shocked at the lack of morals exhibited, and the two old dames went out at regular intervals to look at the moon. The preacher wouldn't talk at all the next day.

Divion has a memorial now, and the gardens appear improved. The church and the old water mill are the same, and the road just as hard to climb as you proceed to Calonne Ricouart. There is the long stone wall on the left and trolleys running overhead on cables, then the slag heaps and mines and railhead. Lucky you were if you had enough money to eat in that village as you came off leave, for the prices were high and the officers took possession of the only good place, the tall brick house on the right.



"In the old triangle at Bruay there is a French memorial, very dramatic and banked with flowers."



Market Day on the Grande Place, Arras, 1932.

Up another long hill, under trees, and we were in Cauchy à la Tour, and two things caught the eye. One was an immense heap of straw in the street, almost blocking the way. They were threshing in a barn and simply pitching the straw into the narrow street, let traffic get by as it might. The other thing was a bathtub, set on a sidewalk and fixed to water pipes, with soap in a dish and clothes lying alongside as though we had frightened some timid one away.

Past the usual memorial, and we are back among more old scenes. Ferfay! Every man of the 3rd Division who took a course of any kind knows, or knew. Ferfay. It's exactly the same today. But the old château is closed, shuttered, deserted, the huts are gone and the old practice trenches filled in. What a place it was! I saw some of the Dumbells give a performance there under the trees, one of their first efforts, I think. It was there that "Mutt" Simmonds had his famous crack platoon, who bombed German posts in the orthodox manner, showing exactly how it should be done in the line, and where a 116th sergeant got very wrathful when we would go to sleep while he was holding forth on the mysteries of musketry.

There was a quarter bloke at Ferfay who must have lost countless blankets. Whenever we were short of cash the procedure was to go to him for something and hold his attention while a comrade filched a blanket by means of the end door. And another chap and I, a Forty-niner, assisted our scheme by stealing back the blanket from the madame to whom we had peddled it for eggs and chips. She would put the blanket in a room on the ground floor and we would go in the window and get it again. She never missed it, as she had a pile then of at least twenty blankets by her bed. It was a solemn business, getting on parade at Ferfay, and there were numberless rituals to perform before you went to your classes. It was all a great game that no one took seriously, but gave you a rest from the line. And the only time I clicked for guard there was a day that Sir Douglas Haig came by. What a shouting and turning out as we heard the bugle of his advance car!

We went on by Auchy-au-Bois, also unchanged, and into St. Hilaire, and it seemed as if we had but left yesterday. Only one thing is different. There are no Chinese there now, and the trenches they dug have disappeared. We used to sell them bully beef at five francs a tin, and the cooks had a hard time keeping a stock on hand. The estaminet of the "Fighting Cocks" still does a good business, and madame still shaves as in wartime, or said she did. We went to the old barns where No. 14 platoon lived, and the walls look as rat-ridden as then. The crazy girl at Billet Ten died more than a year ago, and the fat, black-haired lady who lived where the cook kitchen was, has married a Portuguese.

At Bourecq we went past the little estaminet on the right where one could always get coffee or wine. The old lady is dead, and the man in charge knows nothing about the Canadians. Bourecq is much the same—the old billets, estaminets, and the two stores that sold post cards, silk handkerchiefs and chocolate. There is the old schoolhouse that we used as a writing room, the house where we voted, where three of us sold our votes for two francs each to a crazed corporal who was backing conscription.

And there it was that a dandy just over from England fell into the farm midden on the night of his coming on guard, and the stream where the officers raced bottles under strange and wonderful names. Farther on that same stream deepens, and on this side at the square white-walled house lived three ladies very popular with all soldiers. The Forty-twos were in the territory and resented the intrusion of R. C. R.'s who forded the stream and invaded. The next night there were almost casualties. The R. C. R.'s nearly drowned. Some one had placed a barbed wire entanglement in the brook, and it's bad stuff on a dark night.

We went into Lillers, and found it gay with marketing, and swarming with rug pedlars, with all the windows decorated for Christmas. It looked very different.

Then we were in Burbure, which has a few old billeting signs still displayed, and an estaminet with a picture of Sir Wilfrid Laurier.



Entrance to Grange Tunnel as it is today.

CHAPTER XIII

BAPAUME AND COURCELETTE

ON A frosty morning we left Arras via Ronville and the Arras-Bapaume road. Old war ruins are here and there along the way until you reach the Beaurains British Cemetery. It was an early hour and few people were moving. The ground was frozen hard and little iced pools glinted in the first sunshine. Beaurains is a small village that seems put together like building blocks, all facing inward. We crossed the light railway, passed a water tank, Nissen huts, a long huge barn, and saw the steeple of a white church over on the right.

This was Mercatel, and a troop of children were on their way to school. A woman was hanging clothes on a line, an unusual thing, for always they are spread on the grass regardless of ducks, geese and dogs. The road became smoother, and on both sides were long straight lines of young trees. In a field beside the road a farmer was harrowing, and near him another leaned on a root cache and ate a huge sandwich, holding it with one hand and catching the debris with the other.

Soon we were in Boiry, a street of straggled houses seemingly proud of a wooden bicycle shop. Half a dozen men had congregated there as if it were a café, and boys outside gazed at the window display as if it were something rare. "A la Bergère, Estaminet." We entered gladly to have a coffee, and madame had a good fire going. We asked her if she had been there before the war.

"No, merci, no," she said. "I came from a good town, Mericourt."

We talked longer with her, and presently she divulged that she had been sent far back of the lines by the Germans. Her husband was killed during the war

and there were no children, so she considered herself lucky to marry this farmer who also had a small café. He was younger than she, she said, but only in years. The war had aged him, as he was a prisoner for two years, after having enlisted at the age of sixteen.

STEAM was rising from a small brook as we went on, and trees had beautiful frosty coverings. Several houses had not opened their shutters, and horses in a field were blowing cloudy breaths. We sped along to Boyelles. A huge barn jutted out like a corner of the village, and there is a railway embankment on the right. Each house has a big yard, and in the centre of the village there is a field of sugar beets. Seeders and farm implements of every kind are stored in the open, and grain was stowed to the limit of a great iron shed that only had ends and a roof, no side walls.

Leaving the village, one meets a scene that reminds one of the prairies of Western Canada. On the left all that is visible is rolling ground, seeded fields, a vast slope that gradually rises to a crest and leaves one with the impression that there is nothing but bare fields beyond. Those great farm stretches are on the right as well, but a steeple is on the horizon, and then a farm looms up at the crossroads leading to Hamelincourt, and soon you see another on the left skyline.

And now teams are in these great fields. We go up a long grade and are in territory where all seem engrossed in seeding. Six teams are in one square, two seeders and four harrows, and two of the drivers are women. The horses plod steadily, huge percherons with enormous harness, driven by one rein. Near the road three women and a man are huddled over some task, and each one is



"And life goes on"—even in once shattered Bapaume.



One of the main streets in restored Bapaume.

eating from a wedge of bread held in the left hand. Apparently these folk leave without breakfast in order to reach their land in time to do a day's work.

A wood appears on the left, and the skyline holds an assortment of windmills, stacks, steeples and chimneys. We reach Ervillers, with many old tree stumps among the fine young trees that line the road. Advertisements familiar in Canada are numerous, typewriters and sewing machines having the widest displays. One wonders who, in that district would use typewriters. There is much display of grey concrete and yellow brick trimmings on the houses, and then you see a hedge with a corner trimmed cleverly so that a long-necked horse projects, going at full speed, a most unusual decoration. We had turned left from the village and trees begin to appear, lining the edges of the fields, while three great stubs are in a hollow, shrapnel-scarred veterans. Some fields are grassed and at last we see a huge pasture in which a herd of black and white cattle are feeding.

Behagnies appears, and the first object one notices in the town is an ancient pump, a monstrous affair set in a brick casing, no doubt much used by soldiers. It is a scattered little town, with many wooden huts among the brick buildings, with trees and a concrete water tank. A cemetery outside the village is bordered with a thin hedge, through which the white stones show in an eerie manner. There are still more trees, and the country gets more hilly, while a sunken road leads off on the left like a wide trench. Nine stately trees, which survived the devastating gun fire, stand in review in a hollow.

Biefvillers shows, a village on the right. Then, at a corner, there is a small square of yew trees surrounding some monument. Now there is a change of scenery. There are hedges and rows of trees, and small groves are everywhere in the fields. Many wooden huts appear, and we are in Sapignies.

IT IS but a short step farther into Bapaume. Bapaume was a fearful wreck when last I saw it in '18, but now it has, at first glance, the appearance of many other new French towns. But stop

a moment and you'll see how unlike the others it really is. War ruins are everywhere, and the longer you wander about the town the more you find. Here and there are stretches without old shrapnel-scarred walls and wall-less cellars, but they are few. You can even find old machine gun posts and the debris of war if you look carefully. Peace has partially restored the place, but an old Frenchwoman outside one of the wooden huts complained bitterly that it could never be "her Bapaume" again. She said it was originally one of the finest of French towns, with an atmosphere of the sixteenth century, and a Hôtel de Ville that was the admiration of every one. She was in the wooden hut, she said, because never could she quite decide to spend the rest of her days in a place so crucified by war.

We went out of Bapaume by the Albert road, and after crossing the railway saw many more old cellars and craters, and barbed wire in rolls and much corrugated iron. Then a brickworks on the right was passed, and one huge lone tree like a solemn witness to all that had occurred in war time. A concrete emplacement in a field drew our attention. It was almost intact, with two-foot walls. All about that area you can see the remnants of old trenches, craters and battery positions—"war ground" in every sense of the word.

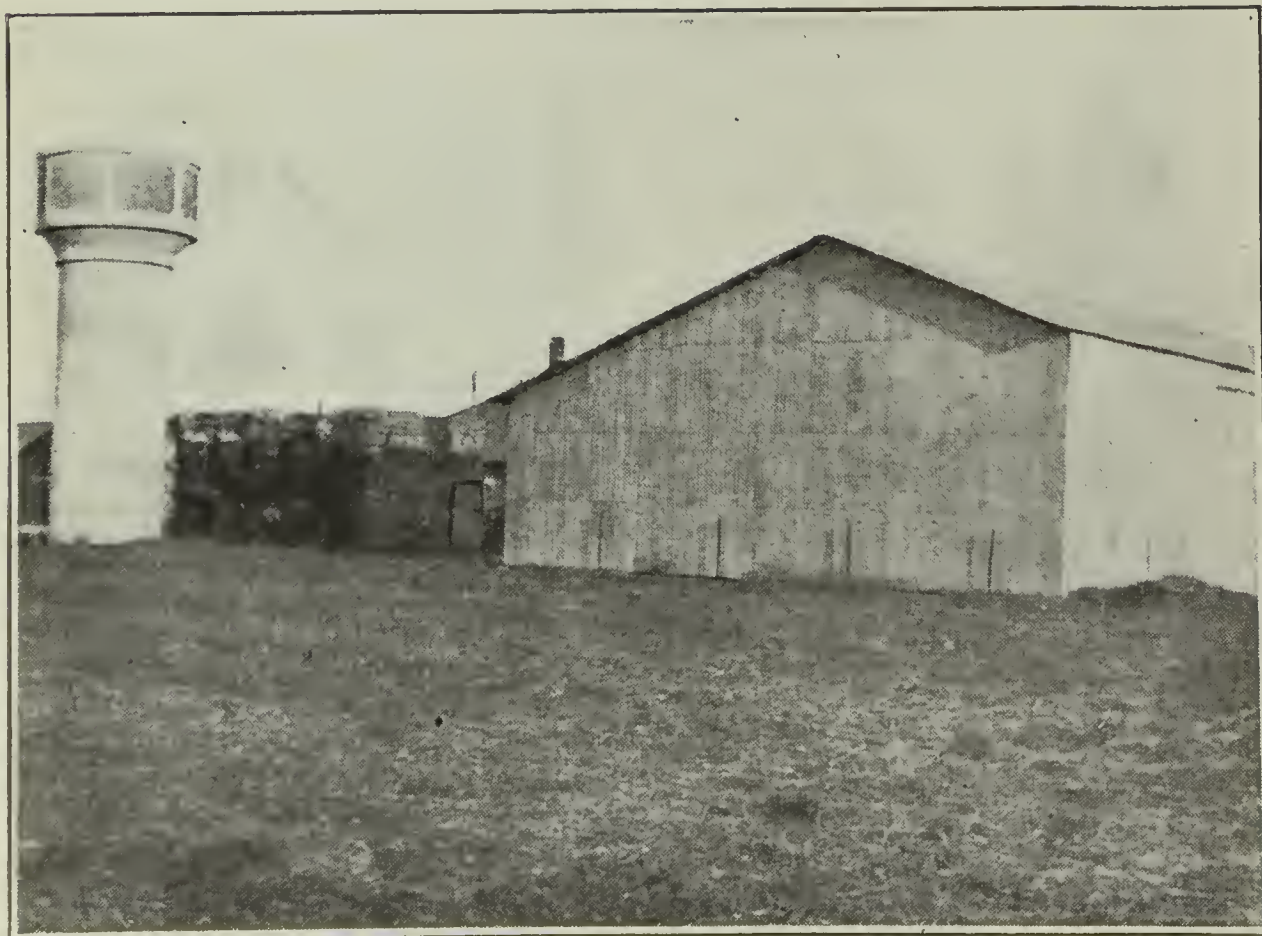
On the left there are many villages, Thillois, Ligny and La Barque being very near. On the right is an expanse of seeded fields, with here and there an old strongpoint still protruding.

We entered Warlencourt, a village of many colors, as painted concrete and yellow brick help to relieve the monotony of new red. Byrrd and "Vin" signs abound and there are many cafés. But on either side of the main street are gaps, cellars, bits of brick walls, old ruins lying untouched. At one gap long rows of manure heaps in a field beyond looked extremely like hastily-formed parapets, and several revolving scarecrows seemed to be soldiers looking anxiously for orders.

On the left we pass Warlencourt Cemetery, and then the famous Butte of Warlencourt, a steep-sided mound which was



The sugar refinery, Courcelette, in 1918.



The courcelette sugar refinery as it is today.

soaked in blood in war days. A cross stands at its summit, fifty feet above ground level. That butte is an ancient burial ground, and there used to be three crosses on it, two in honor of the Durham Light Infantry who fell in November, '16, and one erected to the memory of the Sachs Infantry Regiment 179, Germans who captured the mound. It was a strange coincidence that the Durhams should attack it and capture it when the same battalion of Germans were in occupation. A number of shattered tree stubs lead away from the spot as if they had lined some roadway. Where an old water tank was at the close of the war is now a turnip field, and on the left a crater remains unfilled.

Another wide field and we are in Le Sars, spick and span with painted concrete, new brick and new tiles. Yellow and blue form the decorations, with here and there a concrete fence or footway. Sometimes wide barndoors open on the sidewalk, and people on foot must walk into the street to avoid a team of mules which stand partly outside. The church spire of Pys seems very near on our right, and beyond it the red roofs of Miraumont gleam in the sunlight.

WE PASS a windmill mounted on a water tank, a very yellow villa and a long barn. Many of the farms in this region have immense buildings, as if they were government institutions, and we pass one now, larger than three ordinary establishments, with seven men at work in the great inner yard. It is all open fields on the left, fertile ground, in great green squares or newly harrowed brown earth. And all this way the road is lined with young trees, all set exactly in rows. France must have planted, or transplanted, millions of these trees.

We see a sort of ditch with old dugout entrances in its banks, and then there is an area of war ground on the left, criss-cross of old trenches and many shell craters. Here and there old iron stakes protrude, some festooned yet with black wire. We go by a café on a corner and then enter the wide open spaces. On the left there is not a building or tree, only the distant spire of Flers breaks the monotony, and it is much the same on the

right except that many farmers are at work, getting more numerous until I count ten of them in a few acres near Destremont Farm.

COURCELETTE! It seemed but a small village as we stood and gazed over its roofs from the higher ground at the old sugar refinery. The refinery ruin projects in full view of the road, but mostly it has been covered by the building of a most modern establishment, owned by the present mayor of Courcellette. The ruin shows itself between the great barn and water tower. We went to the Canadian Memorial, which is on the right just before the village—beautiful ground with a brown hedge surrounding it. The memorial itself is but another of those stones such as centre the grounds at Hill 62 and at Passchendaele, most disappointing to the usual conception of a memorial.

We went down the slope into the village. The church is very new, and the memorial of the French is near by. The houses also look quite new, and here and there you see old cellars and low ruins. There are three very large barns in the village, and the Mairie is almost hidden by them. I went into a blue-painted café bearing a huge sign, "Tabac — Cabine Téléphonique."

Madame greeted us warmly and was quite eager to talk. She is an "original" of Courcellette, and told us of her life there during eighteen months of German occupation, and of seeing a German officer kick his men on parade. The British shells came very near and the Germans were remarkably adept at taking cover. After the people came back to the ruins of Courcellette and started rebuilding they found many German dead in the cellars where they had been crushed by the barrage preceding its capture.

We went outside and found a road leading toward Regina Trench. Going along it a distance into the old sunken road, we soon came to men shovelling earth on a winter cache of vegetables. In their digging they were very near the road bank and they had uncovered two German helmets, German long boots, mess tins, equipment, and a few bones.



The sunken road, Courcellette.



Pozières is now a typical rural French village.

They did not mind, they said, as long as there were no shells or bombs. Never did they plow or harrow, they told us, but they uncovered some debris of war. We found a section of rough ground, seemingly an old trench, and, judging from my map, a part of old Kenora Trench. There was not a trace of Regina, or Hessian, or Fabeck Graben or Zollern.

We wandered away over toward Thiepval in our search of a trace of Desire Trench, and found none, or any war signs near Moquet Farm. On the soft ground it was a long, tiresome tramp, and there was not a trace of old trenches as a reward. Only those with very vivid memories could now point out the exact lines that were assaulted during those terrible autumn days of '16.

The Germans still talk of "the blood bath of the Somme," and all veterans agree that for terrific shell fire among conditions of mud and water in terrible weather, the battle of the Somme was only exceeded in dreadfulness by the battle of Passchendaele. For every Victoria Cross awarded there, a hundred were equally well won.

COURCELETTE CEMETERY gleams white in the distance as you leave the Sugar Factory, and the blurred whiteness of two others are seen beyond. All through the Somme one passes countless cemeteries, British, French and German, until it seems a great valley of the dead.

Long open fields, and then we halted beside the Tank Memorial, four miniature tanks at the foot of a shaft. It is beside Pozières, a straggling village with many wooden huts, small houses, and a few big farm homes. Villa Victoria is the name of the only expansive front we saw. Just outside the village, on the site of the old windmill of Pozières, is a memorial of the Australians, and there is a monument erected in memory of some of the King's Royal Rifles. Contalmaison looms on the left, and Thiepval seems near on the right. Pozières British Cemetery is beside the road, and is a beautiful square of double columns, a splendid structure.

Now, over on the right, is Ovillers, in '18 but a mass of brick dust and chalk,

powdered wreckage with nothing definite in its midst. It appears now as a pretty village, blending with the greens of its slopes, with long white rows of fence posts extending from the rear like white streamers; and the cemetery farther on is a shining square of whiteness.

"War ground" is plentiful. You see old gun positions and parts of trenches, and rough contours are frequent as you look over Mash and Blighty valleys. Left and right, these old craters and trench holes become more plentiful, and then you are at La Boisselle in the very heart of the war-torn area. It is a tiny village. A few heroic ones have tried to reclaim that wilderness, but only the main street and another lane or so have resulted. All else are craters, shell holes, gullies, rifts in the earth, barren in spots of anything that grows.

To the right a gate bears a large sign, Fermez La Porte S. V. P. Going through it and over the slippery chalk soil, you reach the lips of an enormous crater. While we stood there, a carload of tourists came. They were gazing all about them, remarking on the condition of the village ground, but when they reached the crater they stood silent, and went away saying very little. They had got a glimpse of war.

We crossed to the other road, went over it and out to the other huge crater. All about it, desolation extends like a terrible wound. In smaller craters we saw much refuse of war, and then in a shell hole probed at a leather end and found it to be an entire equipment. Near by was a water bottle and a bayonet scabbard. A steel helmet, jagged by a shrapnel cut, showed where a rotting ground sheet held long German boots. Wandering around, we saw countless other relics, as if the place had never been visited. Below the village there is a memorial to the Tyneside Irish and Tyneside Scottish. They were in that vicinity when those craters were blown July 1, '16, and the great battle of the Somme commenced.

GOING on, Sausage Valley looks peaceful enough, with three horses feeding in its pasturage. On the right is Usna Hill, and on the left Tara Hill, so well known to Canadians. An open,

featureless field extends where the horse lines used to be, and there were grain stacks on the site of the old "Y." The hills are a rich, dark green, and all that outskirt of Albert is most verdant looking.

Bapaume Post Cemetery is passed, and then we are entering Albert, mecca once for many weary battalions. There are huts even in the town, and long tenements. We cross the railway and soon are among new buildings of blue and grey and yellow borders, new concrete and flaring signs. It is all very modern, and the garage man who supplied us with "essence" tells us that Albert sees a multitude of tourists. Here and there we spot old ruins, but the Grande Place and its Hôtel de Ville are most imposing. The cathedral and its new Virgin are very grand, and the station and its surroundings are modern in every detail. Albert appeared to me a very lively energetic town, eager for business. At the left, near the station, where the river shows itself, there is much war wreckage. Just outside in that direction all seems as it was, but on the whole the tourist must be impressed.

We had lunch at the café, A Tout Va Bien, and were served an excellent meal. At the next table was an ex-sergeant of

Army Transport, and he entertained us with stories of war days. One of the drivers had come to grief with a load of hay. It had toppled over into a very deep and dirty ditch, and the man was badly worried about what his sergeant would say. "Never mind," our new friend had said to the man, "I'll help you with it and there's no need to tell him." "Yer blinkin' right," said the shaky one. "E was on top the load."

One of those passenger cars marked for eight horses or forty men had arrived at a railhead with fifty men who had been playing sardines in its interior all that bumpy day. A sergeant-major was unloading them. "Come along," he bellowed. "We can't wait all night." "All right," came a voice from the depths. "Tyke the top off this ruddy cage an' we'll fly out like sparrers."

Our friend told us that over near Trones Wood a German was found digging industriously about a year after the war. He claimed that a pay officer of his regiment had been buried alive there by a big shell, and that the man had five watches in his pockets, as well as the battalion pay in a leather satchel. He was rather rudely advised to stop digging.



The Albert of 1932 is an enterprising modern town.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OLD SOMME

ON THE left side of the Bapaume-Albert road you find a zone that you will remember. Nowhere else do you see as many huts, wooden ones and Nissen ones, and barns with board walls; wood used in the rebuilding rush just after the war. Nowhere else will you see such utter squalor as prevails there in early winter, for Somme mud and filth are not easily duplicated.

Nowhere else are there such woods. Young trees, with old stubs scattered among them like monuments, straight black stubs, and crooked ones with weird limbs, like an old hag in torment. High Wood, Delville Wood, Trones Wood, Bernafay Wood, Bottom Wood, Mametz Wood, Peake Wood, Bailiff Wood, Round Wood and Shelter Wood. A few miles enclose the lot and include Acid Drop Copse and Flat Iron Copse.

Nowhere else have I seen as many sunken roads. They lead in all directions, and in them you can see nothing of the district about you. And all that territory is dotted with concrete water-towers and windmills. Like the rest of the Somme, all the old trenches seem traceable. Long, wide, white paths curve at all angles across any ploughed ground—chalky trails of every front line and support trench, as well as all the old C. T.'s. Were all that country newly tilled and had one a war map of '16, he could reconstruct the entire battle picture.

Only up at Ypres do you see as many cemeteries and memorials. The cemeteries are everywhere—in the valleys, on the slopes, in unexpected corners and fields of stones—and the memorials rise at every cross-roads. I counted twenty-four cemeteries between Flers and La



The ruins of the old cathedral at Albert as they were at the close of the war.



Albert's new cathedral is ornate but imposing.

Boisselle. And memorials! There were more than a dozen in that distance. Souvenirs, too. Each village has a pile of shells and old bombs and bayonets, and broken rifles and steel helmets.

When I came I was told that the French Government had cleaned the land of all war debris. Three different times they had gone over all the long battle line, searching, probing, cleaning off every shell and relic. Yet you cannot go one mile today in a battle zone without finding shells and war material showing. Some say that the land is settling each year and thus exposing nine-point-twos and old "fusees." Others will tell you that the metal is working upward, and will continue to do so. I do not know. But along the Somme I saw more eighteen pounders at farm gates, more old bombs and wire stakes and scrap metal than anywhere else I have been. Go in a farmyard and you will see German pot helmets used as wash basins and bowls for chicken feed, and in the kitchens you may find bayonets used as stove pokers; while if you talk with madame she will soon unearth some relic she is keeping as a treasure. It may be the badge of an English regiment, an old flare pistol or Luger, or perhaps an Iron Cross.

EVERY village on the Somme seems the same, as if all had been rebuilt by the same contractor. Every one of them in winter is an eyesore to travellers or any one outside the area. You disturb a huge flock of crows as you approach the place, pass a huddle of grain stacks, and are in view of a collection of huts. These look as if they had been hastily erected in the only cleared spaces that existed at the time, and there they remain.

Some of the wooden ones are painted, always a bilious blue or sickly yellow. Inside the hut suburb you meet long barns, usually cornering the street, immense brick walls with enormous doors in the centre, or else wooden walls and, often, corrugated iron roofs. These barns are established with the same haphazard method of location, and the street or road seems to curve in and out to please them. Here and there the big doors are open and you view a spongy

midden crowded with pigs and fowl, and get a glimpse of a bony female clumping around the brick or cobbled ledge of the yard. She will be carrying a bush broom or spade or pitchfork, her feet in clumsy sabots and a scarf around her neck. In the corner of the yard there will be an accumulation of tools and poles and various buckets and tubs, and a yapping dog will be straining at his chain as you go by.

Go around the corner and there may be a brick house with a low wall in front surmounted by an iron fence, always painted green. Perhaps there will be three or four homes of a semi-bungalow type, with a concrete finish that has been painted various colors, brown and yellow and a blue-grey. These have many ornaments at the corners and all sorts of artistry about the windows. Beyond them is an estaminet or two, generally placed, with canny judgment, near the brick- or concrete-walled water hole. There the thirsty drivers bring their horses at noon and have their beer. One or two shops, in houses, and possibly a bakery or barber shop, and you reach the church, brick or concrete and fantastic in construction or hideously plain, then the combined Mairie-Ecole, the War Memorial, and you are through the town. It is fringed on the far side by the same collection of huts, and the regular water-tower and windmill will not be far away. Up in the Vimy area some of the villages are anything but picturesque, but there never is such a hodge-podge of crooked dirty streets, as many huts, or such a spread of corrugated iron.

The people, however, are voluble. They will tell you endless stories about those killed or maimed through disturbing explosives, about the things they have seen in old dugouts and cellars when first they returned to their lands, and they will talk to you of bodies found until your flesh crawls. Whether or not they have concocted such entertainment for tourists, I cannot say.

DRIVING back from Albert, we branched off to the right at La Boisselle, going past the Tyneside memorial and the small and largest craters. The first few hundred yards, after you

leave the houses are bordered on each side by shell holes and piled debris, old war ground as it was in '18. We traveled a sunken road and saw old funk holes and trenches on the left, then broad fields and flocks of crows, and before we knew it were among the wooden huts of Contalmaison.

It was the usual thing, Nissen huts, yellow concrete, water hole and all; and the only distinction I can give it is that there seemed to be more goats and pigeons than at the other places, and the church was an extremely plain and ordinary building. Corrugated iron sprouted in all directions, and old wire stakes were freely used. On mentioning things of war interest, an old chap whom we found wheeling an enormous barrow-load of old wood became quite excited and took me on an extensive tour of farm property that culminated at a small hole under some bushes. It was probably a dugout entrance, though I could not be sure, but I was leg weary before I got back to the village. It looked like some of the "chimneys" that were attached to dugouts near Neuville St. Vaast, which makes me think of a natty major who was on a visit to the support line when a very warm shelling of the area began. He raced, ducked, dodged, and finally reached a dugout, going down its rain-washed entrance with something like a dive. "What the devil do you mean?" he spluttered as he dug filth out of his ears. "I never saw such an entrance. Why don't you have decent steps?" "We have," said the weary ones about, "but you came down the chimney."

Keeping on along the winding, dipping road, we were soon between the two Woods, Bazentin-le-Grand and Bazentin-le-Petit—green young growth punctuated with dark stubs and stumps. By the Petit one we halted, and after a short exploring I found old trenches and wreckage of strongpoints. In places you could find old wire and stakes, and kick old shells in the tangles. The Wood was almost impassable and lends the impression that it has never been explored since the war. After a million crows were disturbed we reached a farm and a windmill. Soon wooden huts were in

view, and we knew we were in Bazentin-le-Petit.

There were many old cellars and ruins to be discovered, and the road twists as in other villages and winds uphill to Nissen huts placed side by side like a small camp. Wooden barns, yellow concrete, plain church, and a combined mairie and école, and you have the picture, but you need three inches of soft mud to squelch about your boots and the smell of middens in your nostrils to make you know that you are there.

We went on across a dirty stretch of fields, and the road was treacherous and slippery. A huge barn cornered our way and as we got around it an old woman came out, plodding through the mire. We asked her where we were, as I could see a big concrete emplacement, the first I had seen in a long time. "Martinpuich," she grunted, and went on.

Wood barns and gardens and the inevitable better home with the green-painted iron fence around it, and we had arrived at the water hole. A dozen children were playing near, in a brick heap beside old ruins, and a more forlorn playground could not be imagined. But Martinpuich sports two water holes, the second of which has a concrete wall, and you wind down hill past the church and school to where a small cluster of wooden huts confront you. Then you find your way as best you can. Three roads meander off in an absent-minded manner. Martinpuich would drive a town-planner crazy.

WE WENT on out the sunken road and to Courcellette again. I wanted to have another look at the sunken road there. It is banked as high as your shoulder, and on top you can see the long white lines that indicate old trenches. A farmer came along, riding an immense horse, and asked what I was looking for. He began to talk as soon as I explained, and told me that he had seen at least a hundred bodies taken from the sunken road. When they had cleaned it and made it wide enough for traffic they found British and German weapons of all kinds, bombs, shells, everything, even to a huge cheese, under the mounds of shell-piled earth. Only last summer a boy had his arm blown off by a bomb

explosion as he played in Somme fields, and the farmer said he had seen an auto blown from the road as it detonated a shell. It will be years before they can move with security in the old battlefields, and today's newspapers, December, 1931, have an account of a farmer up near Kitchener's Wood who found all his stock gassed. Horses and cattle, even the poultry, were in a bad way. The veterinary was hastily summoned, and after his verdict a search was made. In the field near the barn they located two German gas cylinders, buried a foot below the surface. They had finally rusted so that leaks were made. The only solution is that they were placed there for the gas attack in '15, and that our shellfire had covered them so deeply that the Germans did not try to uncover them.

Within this same week farmers found at Wieltje fifty-eight German dead. Another problem of the war that may never be solved. How came they to be there? The Germans were never in that area, and there is no record of the British burying any dead at the point where they were found.

Going to Bapaume, down the street that has been widened to make the "main street," and passing the church and memorial, we went along the road leading to Flers. There are wooden huts galore as you leave Bapaume, and a windmill and water tower are on the left. Soon we were at Ligny-Tilloy, two tiny villages that use one church for worship. Huts, sunken roads, corrugated iron, Nissen huts—you have all the regular features, and a most pleasant Café du Nord.

FLEERS is not as topsy-turvy a place as some of the other villages, but has its own share of huts and corrugated iron. It has more painted concrete, however, and some neat brick houses, a shrine, and a memorial to the 41st British Division. You leave it by its poorer side and, after the road has convulsions, see High Wood far on the right and Delville Wood close at hand. There is rough war ground in plenty, and the wood is not able to hide its black shrapnel-pitted stubs.

Go through Longueval, on high ground that gives you a good view of Caterpillar Valley, and you see an unusual number of wooden barns and elephant iron shelters and old huts, making it seem the first village rebuilt. Then you are at the Delville Memorial, the finest thing in the Somme area. The cemetery is on the right side of the road, the memorial on the left, with seven acres of beautiful lawn leading to an arc-shaped structure with pavilions at either end connected by a wall with a central arch. The whole is surmounted by a beautiful bronze group, figures suggesting that "unity is strength," symbolic of Dutch and British South Africa.

The Wood is just as it was at the end of the war. The French Government and all others have left it alone. You see shells and bombs and twisted iron, and old rifle butts protruding, see old gullies that may have been trenches, craters, dark holes, hiding agonies of war. No one is allowed off the paths, an extent of five miles of neat walks, and the entire 170 acres are a wonderful memorial. It is two miles around the wood.

High Wood is to be cleared and used as a pasture — that was what we were told as we went on. Trones Wood, so our informant said, was to be let as a hunting park, but he said that the Wood was full of old holes and gullies and rotting emplacements and debris, and would be very difficult to penetrate.

We were soon passing the Guillemont sugar factory, rebuilt and very busy, and then came the village of Guillemont, with its huts covered with pigeons, its concrete pink and yellow, its gardens looking healthy. A memorial to the 16th Irish Division is there, and sunken roads abound.

We passed the cemetery and were alongside Trones Wood, and five minutes in its depths soon convinced me that the truth had been told about its condition. Old wire and stakes and rotted stubs, and holes of all kinds are there, and the young growth has made it like a jungle. A tall shaft in memory of men and officers of the 18th Division stands in the fringe of the Wood.



All the villages in the Somme sector are drab, and Le Sars is no exception.



The citizens of Miraumont turn out in force to unveil a war memorial.

We crossed the railway and passed a café and brick factory and were in Montauban. It seems a better planned village than the others. The church is not so ugly nor the streets so dirty. But there are many ruins to be seen, and much elephant iron, before you slip past blue-painted wooden huts into a sunken road leading into a vast open. Soon you have a splendid view across low ground on your right and Mametz Wood is dark in the distance.

Mametz itself meets you—a very small village, straggling, with huts and pigeons and ruins. A memorial there has R. I. P. in big letters at the top and is obviously of war-time construction, erected in honor of the 7th Division. Then we pass Dantzig Alley Cemetery, down a deep road, with Bottom Wood a scattered bush on the right. Fricourt is the next stopping-place with crooked streets, a windmill, Nissen huts, big barns, and a water hole. At the estaminet there we were told of eight Germans who come each July and gather in a spot near the village, the high ground outside, and there spend the day. They have their lunch and they do not ask questions. Sometimes they visit the few cafés and drink beer, but usually they keep aloof, and they seem of the officer type. It is typical of the Somme farmer that he makes no effort to solve the identity of his visitors.

OVER the railway again, and under further clouds of crows, and we are in sight of Albert. The fields about are blocks of dark green or red brown, and cemeteries seem everywhere. A huge French one on the right flies a big flag, and there is the communal cemetery at the foot of the slope.

Albert is a flare of signs, fancy advertisements and profuse lettering as you enter it from that angle. We see the new brewery that has been built on the old cellar, go under the subway past old cellars, and into the old brickfield zone. It is now all grass or beet grounds. Over on the left you see some brick sheds, but there is nothing near the road. Where the ammunition dumps used to be, there are five yellow grain stacks. A few old stubs are here and there, but for the most it is all a stretch

of smooth green fields. We drive all the way into Bouzencourt and see nothing outstanding. The latter village is very dirty and there are many old huts, some with wartime signs still on them. Several donkeys were standing before huge carts in the square or open space in the centre of the village. Many ruins are about, and the place seems to lack ambition.

We went around Aveluy, and the view is worth the trip. On the highest part we could look over Usna Valley, with bare Usna Hill rising toward the Bapaume Road, and with Blighty Valley seeming much larger than it really is.

Martinsart was next on the list. It abounds in old war ground and there are many ruins about, shell-shocked walls in the very centre of the village. I wandered around the old ground back of the houses and nearer Mesnil, and found seven old funk holes in a row and three dugouts that one can still enter. There are many battery positions, and in the wood you find old craters and torn earth that is but thinly covered with weeds.

The village of Mesnil has nothing to offer as an attraction, but the Wood there is most interesting. You can trace gun positions all through it, find old posts and saps all about that area.

Thiepval now looks down on you. Forty acres up on the ridge are left as they were at the close of the war. All the old trenches, craters, machine-gun posts, everything is there, grassed over and tumbled in but easily recognized, and some of the trenches are deep, and old holes may let one into an underground.

The Ulster Memorial Tower is something unique among memorials, and the caretaker leads you up the long stairs to the top and lets you look all over the Somme while he explains the fighting of '16 as he saw it. A great British memorial to all the missing of the Somme is being made ready for an unveiling in 1932. It is a gigantic thing in a most conspicuous position on Thiepval Ridge, as large and about twice as high as the Menin Gate, which rises 150 feet in the air. It will have the names of 73,000 missing men, and there will be a platform at the top from which the whole

country may be viewed. As a lookout tower it has no rival, and that is the best thing I can say about it.

ALL THE valley of the Ancre is marshy and very wet in winter. A chilling mist covers most of it and the train smoke looks like whiter wool being drawn through it. All along until you reach Hamel you can see signs of old trenches, remnants of them, and dugout entrances and old emplacements. There are cemeteries and wooden huts and churches of red and yellow brick, and behind you a long road up toward the Ulster Memorial looks like a long grey strip. You can find many old craters and trenches in other parts, but on that stretch of the Ancre territory you can see them on every hand. Beaumont is a usual village, but do not leave that area without going to visit the Newfoundland Park. It is a splendid place, with a log cabin at which you may buy postcard views of all the Somme, and with a most interesting caretaker in charge. A caribou is mounted high on a rocky point and is most impressive, and all around the site are old trenches and shelters as they were left in '18. The memorial of the 51st Division is there.

Beaucourt shows you a cleaner village, and around it are more old war ground and swamps. After passing many huge farms as large as Government stations, you reach Miraumont, with a few ruins in evidence but on the whole a different sort of town. There is quite a stir about the streets, and it has many fine homes, nice gardens and fences. The post office is a grand building, and the school keeps pace with it. Filling stations, bright estaminets, painted fronts, much traffic, many children, and you think you are getting near Albert again.

Achiet-le-Petit has fewer huts and much more concrete. It is not a large place but is very different from its sister villages on the other side of the Bapaume road. The main street is direct and wide, and there is not the filth and slovenly conditions one encounters in the other sectors. We pass an up-to-date machine shop, a nice church, and are in Bucquoy, with very neat groceries, pleasant estaminets, clean walks and some very comfortable looking homes.

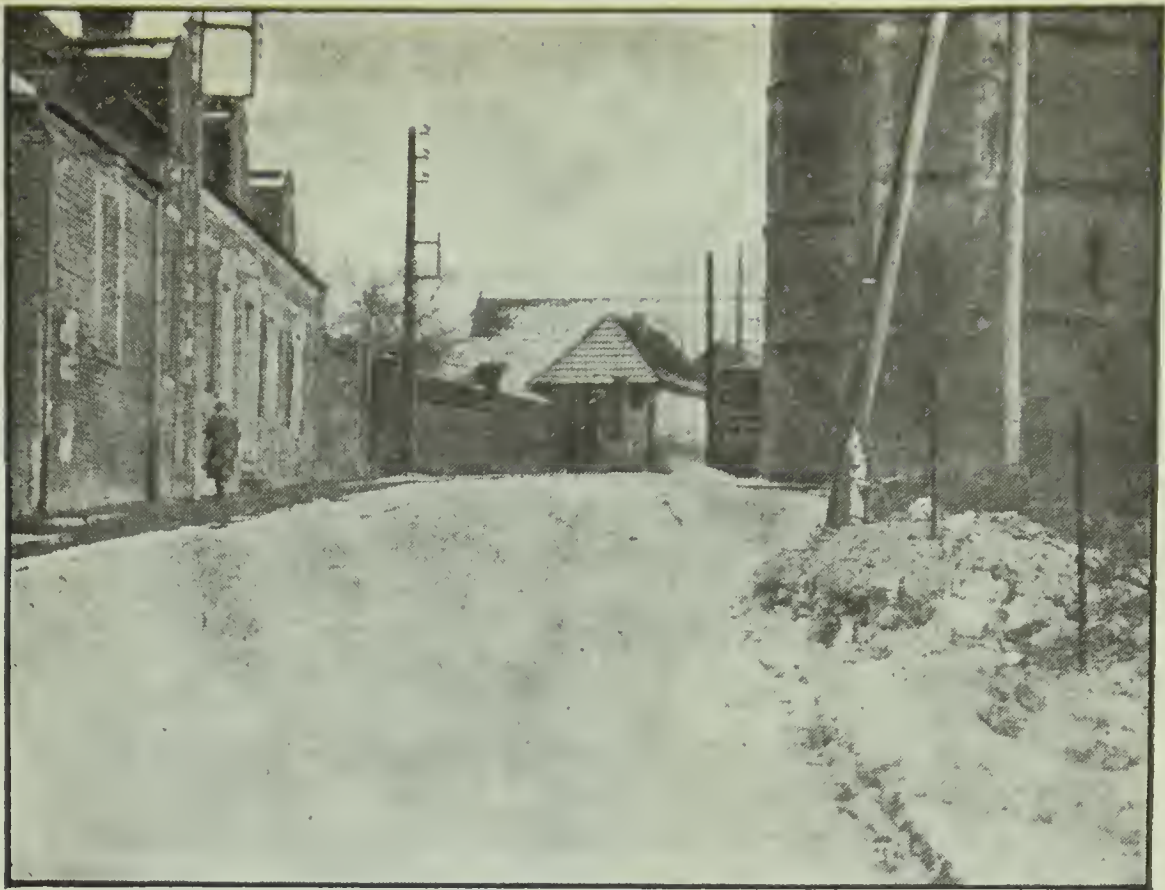
At the Café de Centre we meet another of those few characters still drifting about France, those who deserted during the war.

This chap sat with me at a table and told his story in a most convincing manner. He was of average build with fairly good features, and said he had tried to get in the signal section of his battalion but had been refused a transfer and instead forced to become a bomber. He hated grenades of every kind, and within three days of his being with such specialists saw the sergeant and a private blown to bits as the result of a defective detonator. Then came rumors of a raid at night on the enemy trench, the bombers to furnish part of the attacking party.

"I lost my nerve entirely," he said. "I knew the penalty if I were caught, but I could far more easily face a firing squad of my own fellows than go over there in the dark among the wire and shellfire with those devilish things in my hands."

He beat it at dusk, and managed to get in a lorry that was headed a long way back. Without being detected, he left it at its destination, and shortly after was in a big French town. He spoke French fluently and did a most daring thing. Getting a complete rig-out of French clothes, he dressed as a civilian and enlisted with the French army. He explained that he had been rejected by the recruiting office in England, and was living in France anyway, and wanted a position as interpreter. He is an educated man and speaks German as well as French. The French authorities asked no more questions but gladly accepted him.

He served two years as an interpreter and was then given his discharge. But he dare not return home. He got work in Lille for more than eight years, then has been in Amiens and Paris. He does not know whether or not either of his two brothers survived the war or if his father is living, but says he is sure his desertion would be posted as such and that he would be arrested if known. He would leave France quickly if he had a passport, but he dare not, as yet, apply for one.



A typical street in Caix. The old church is to the right.

CHAPTER XV

DOWN AMIENS WAY

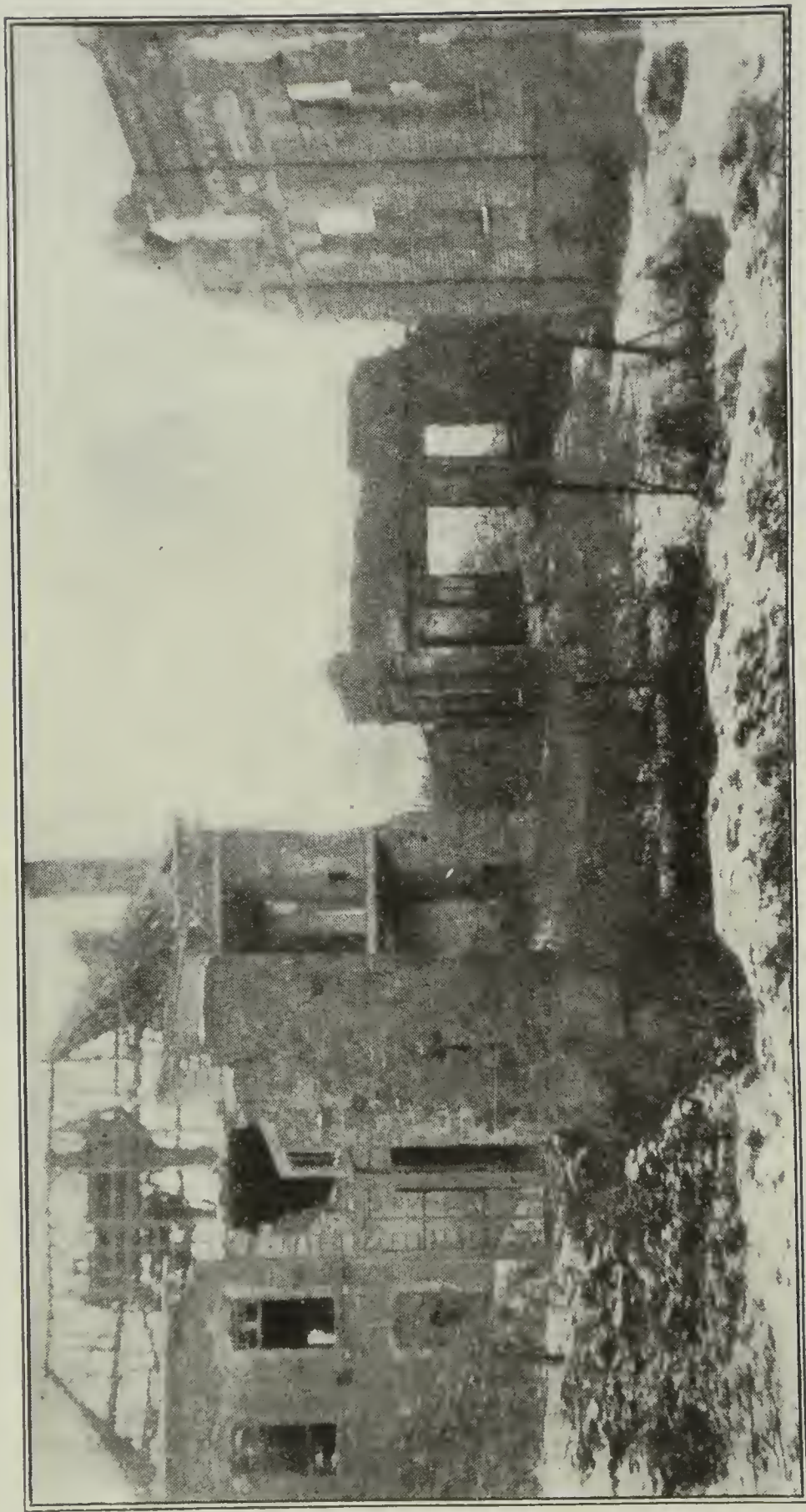
THE driver gives his Lizzie an aperitif of essence and we leave Albert by the Bray Road. We are headed Amiens way, but are minus the expectancy that rode with us when we went along that route in '18 to the great attack of August the eighth.

We pass a French cemetery and dip down into a valley, and soon are passing a large airplane factory. A huge shed is filled with bicycle racks, all the cycles hung on hooks in a long row out of the mud and weather. There are long green slopes on either side, and then brick works on a hill. Magpies float slowly across the road ahead of the car, and on a long, high ridge on the left are men silhouetted against the skyline as they spread manure. There are a few old trees in the low ground, and then we are into Bray Valley, with many cemeteries in view. There are five in sight—Bray Vale, Bray Hill, Bray Communal, and a small one beyond.

There are many large trees and it is a pretty valley, with far banks sheltering the small houses. A few old ruins and we are entering Bray itself.

The streets are very rough, and the way twists and turns amazingly as we go down grade, past old white walls and corners and high archways. There are new buildings sandwiched here and there among the old, and many marks that show where ruins were restored. Painted concrete flashes red and green and yellow. There are many flowers in a few cottage windows just as we go over the bridge, and there we find ourselves alongside tall trees that are reflected in placid pools on the left side of the road. It is all swampy ground, and we see the canal with a horse patiently towing a huge barge.

We pass through a suburb of Bray, with a quaint old church and a very small and ancient Marie. There are more ruins—pitiful old walls and tileless raf-



Gaunt spectres of homes that stand as war reminders in Meharicourt.

ters—more open country, and soon we are in Proyart, a small village with one of the finest French memorials I have seen. We see it soon after passing a German cemetery, and both sides of the road attract the eye. A passer-by told me that the memorial, which is an Arch of Triumph like the one in Paris, was built and the site prepared by a rich wine merchant.

As we proceed we see many shrines in the field, small iron crosses in the most unexpected places, larger ones with three trees guarding them, and some small wooden ones on buildings. A farmer who had three huge horses hitched tandem fashion as he hauled turnips from his field, said that the iron ones in the fields were for the protection of the crops, and the small one on the barn protected it from lightning.

We went across the Peronne-Amiens Road, down which traffic travels at seventy kilometers per hour, and passed by much pressed straw in fields, most of it piled in the shape of houses. Thousands of crows were everywhere, lining some piles as if they were painted with pitch. There are many crab and apple trees beside the roads, and small orchards are in sight. Dugouts show darkly on a distant bank and there are two old battery positions in view, then we are into Harbonnières.

We pass along 200 yards of concrete wall and reach a boulevard. There are two or three squares of trees, tall ones, well spaced so as to form pleasant promenades beneath them and lend beauty to the village. There is much corrugated iron around the smaller houses, but no other signs of war. Flocks of ducks keep traffic from speeding and take turns at the town water hole. The old church is rather grand, and on the whole you remember that it is a pleasant and quaint village.

After passing many stacks and flocks of pigeons, we go past many more old dugout entrances and emplacements and along a wood. A man with a cart piled high behind a very small donkey stops and tells us, as we explore old war ground, that the wood on our right often has wild pigs as visitors, and that he has seen two killed there on one Sun-

day. He spits and swears as we ask about dugouts, and soon we learn that he has lost one of his donkeys through its tumbling into some old hole. More shrines in the fields, more crows, more stacks, and more partridge, and we are in Caix.

If ever a tourist wants to visit scenes he will remember, he should go down over the old Somme territory. He will not be tired by an endless glare of red brick and painted concrete, or disgusted by eternal wooden huts and corrugated iron, but will see war ruins that are more poignant than anything powdered and smashed about the Salient. In among those quaint Picardy villages he can see gaping walls and skeleton house ends, old shops and bakeries and homes partly demolished, gaunt spectres beside their low-roofed, white-walled picturesque cronies.

CAIX is a dream; it hardly seems real. The street winds down to the old church, grey and venerable as it stands beside a ragged ruin. Trees in the valley, quaint passages and alleys, with women in clogs and with kerchiefs round their necks, peering and craning as you go prowling about. Old white walls with soldiers' names inscribed, tiny corners where you can reach the roof, with huge-tiled floors and a cheerful old madame like a granny at home to wait on you. They love to have you linger with them at Caix, to tell about the losses they and their friends endured through the war.

There are more ruins on the way as we leave the village on our way to Rosières, and we go by a winding uphill road that takes us past three huge water towers. A woman with a handcart pauses long enough to tell me that the towers are used to assist the Amiens water supply, though it seems a long way from Amiens. It was a spot somewhere near Caix which the 7th and 10th battalions reached during that August drive, and where they paused to let the 2nd Division pass through them. They will all remember Caix.

Rosières was captured by the 2nd Division. It is not as quaint as Caix, but is not an eyesore to a traveller. It, too, has ruins and small old houses, with



Civilian Proyart hasn't graduated from Nissen huts even thirteen years after.



In Caix many new dwellings stand cheek by jowl with old war ruins.

many new ones sporting concrete. Quite a few yellows and blues mingle, and some streets look modern. The church and memorial are not ugly, and the town distinction is a life-size cow with a woman beside her. The memorial has an inscription stating something about a fund for devastated villages. A delightful little train wanders in the haphazard manner that troop trains acquired, and we learn that the natives call it the "San Fairy Ann." The villages are closer together in this area, and there is no wide open space until you pass another café and several big trees and are in Meharicourt. Fourteen years ago this August it was stormed by the 22nd and 25th battalions after terrific fighting.

A cemetery is on the left, and as you enter the village you see many old war signs painted on the walls, billet numbers, and shrapnel marks. There are a few nice villas, one with three separate shades of yellow, and then ruins. Let no man think that all wreckage is at Caix. There is one side of the street in Meharicourt that seems to have more ruins than good buildings, and at the finish you see a memorial with a queer foundation. It rests on a concrete water tank, from which the people get pails of water without using a pump. Down under is a unique trough for dogs, and the whole is very unusual. An inscription says that it was erected by a man of Providence, Rhode Island, and the name of his son is given, but it does not name the unit with which the soldier served. There are ruins on other streets, and army huts with people living in them, and corrugated iron kennels and pens, and a big tree with wooden steps still nailed in place leading up to an observation post. More Nissen huts and ruins, a few dashes of painted concrete, some nice homes, and you are out among hedges and trees, a copse on the right, and into Maucourt.

THIS village sports bright concrete and new brick, a shrine, a bright red villa, another villa with a huge black cat decorating the walls, more ruins and shrines, ducks, a memorial, village square, church, and a comfortable café. There we sat and heard the story of an

officer who was poisoned while drinking one evening. He was taken very ill and rushed away to hospital. Enquiries and investigations were made, but the blame could not be fastened on any one, though many were suspected. After the war, however, one of his brother officers came back to the village and made love to a certain mademoiselle who had been a favorite of the poisoned man, and the good madame who told us the story is sure that this man was the culprit.

Outside the village a rough concrete emplacement stands at a corner near a lone black Nissen hut. There are ruins farther on, old wall ends and cellars, then a bare rough stretch and a British cemetery on the left as you enter Foquescourt.

Great barns seem to hem the latter village into a cramped space, and Nissen huts, new homes and two shrines are all squeezed together. Two roads lead out, but one is impassable, and the driver gets angry as his query at the last house brings him in contact with the village idiot. There is rough ground on the right and remnants of old trenches, and a wood on the left, then we are in Rouvroy.

It has many wooden huts and war signs on the walls. There are new concrete walls and old, low-roofed houses that survived the war. In a café we find an English paper dated November 16th, 1931, telling of a presentation, at Neath, Glamorganshire, of a cheque for £5,000 to Lieutenant E. J. Rollings, M.C., now a police officer. The gift was from Lady Houston, in appreciation of his remarkable work in connection with a raid made from Amiens in '18.

Lieutenant Rollings was with the 17th Armored Car Battalion, and raided the German headquarters at Framerville, nine miles behind the German lines, securing there valuable documents which gave a full account and plans of the Hindenburg line. He and a Lieutenant Yeoman, with two cars, carried out the stunt after the Australians had smashed the front line and made it possible for them to get through. The armored cars were towed by tanks for two miles over the shell-pounded area and then placed on good roads. At Framerville, Rollings

took the right road and Yeoman the left. He says:

"I had not gone far before I came upon the German headquarters, which were in an old building and to reach which we had to mount some steps. I found the place without any one in it, and was able to make a hurried search and secure a number of papers, which I crammed into a sandbag. As I left, my men and I came face to face with two German staff officers, who were talking, about forty yards from headquarters. We shot them dead before they had time to realize what was happening. I left immediately after securing their revolvers and searching their clothing, from which I secured more papers, and with these I immediately returned, without harm, to headquarters."

Strange to say, Lieutenant Rollings was never told of the value of the booty he secured, knew nothing about it until he was called upon last month by a newspaper reporter.

On the street in front of the café are geese, ducks, hens, dogs, children, more donkeys, and several pigeons. They all seem of one family. Natives who pass to and fro on various errands will walk abreast and suddenly begin talking as if just continuing a conversation. The French of Picardy are like a huge family.

Bouchoir is next, with a few war ruins, an old monument and a sporty Mairie. A woman on crutches is a victim of the war, having lost her foot during a long-range bombardment of the village. There are many big trees about, and on every side you can see the small copse or larger wood that makes the Picardy district so different. And there are many apple orchards. As we stop to prowl about some rough old trench area outside, an old man comes with a basket of apples and satchel for money. He sells to any stranger he sees, knowing his poor chances to sell to local customers.

On the main Amiens-Roye Road we pass Bouchoir Cemetery and soon find that Le Quesnoy is another typical village. It has old ruins and new concrete, more geese and ducks, and its Mairie. In a house there we are shown the helmet of a Prussian major who got drunk and fell off his horse and broke an arm.

His helmet was hidden in the cellar and now serves as a parlor ornament, if the dining room and sitting room and nursery combined could also be called the parlor.

ON THE steps sits a funny, bent old tman with a woollen cap, and he is surrounded by youngsters. All wear the same kind of pinafores, and sex is not noticeable. He is making small violins, whittling the frames from soft wood and stringing the instruments with fine wire, really clever work. Some old madame appears now and then, after an insistent urging by the young fry, and purchases the toy as a New Year's gift. Christmas does not mean much when you speak with the children about Noel. New Year's Day is their big day, and this year it will be bigger still, for Saturday will be but another holiday, and, joined with Sunday, affords a real celebration.

We see a cart stopped at a house, and pause as we watch the café owner argue with a seller of wines. Nothing but the best, is the argument, will do for New Year's. Ah, says the seller, but give them the best only until they are along in their cups. Then—pouf—make money.

Back on the main road again, we see Andechy on the right, a place of big barns, and small houses and a sharp church steeple. We turn left, going past a small wood and crab trees, and reach Damery. There is much new brick crudely used on many houses, concrete that is not painted, corrugated iron and Nissen huts. Damery is a very rough village and seems out of place in such an area. There is no hint of pride or old world tranquillity, and even the geese are dirty and noisy.

Damery has a grim history. During the fighting of August, 1918, it was captured by the 52nd Battalion with relatively so little opposition that the officer commanding that unit, Colonel Foster, grew suspicious and evacuated the place shortly after entering it. He was just in time. The Germans put down a terrific high explosive and gas barrage that lasted for three hours. Then they attacked with four battalions, expecting no opposition. What followed was one of the most terrible slaughters of the war. Our artillery, assisted by

the French, caught the Germans in a barrage that centred on the massed men, and swept the entire line. The front waves were caught between the barrage and the village, and had no chance of escape. The 52nd poured in a deadly hail of rifle bullets and machine gun bullets, and used the bayonet on all who reached them. One Lewis gun fired thirty-four pans. Two hundred and fifty of the Germans surrendered. The dead were piled, in places, four feet high, and over one thousand were killed outright in the death trap.

Parvillers is next, and it is easy to remember happenings there. That sector was honey-combed by underground passages and a maze of old trenches, and there, one blazing hot afternoon with no breeze stirring, the 42nd fought old Heinie weird trench duels. Read about "D" Company in Livesay's *Canada's Hundred Days*, and see the results of the afternoon when Dineson won his Victoria Cross and a dozen more crosses were as well deserved.

The old shrine is as it was, its blocks shell shocked, and one huge concrete emplacement frowns from under the trees. But the old trenches are gone, as the other pillboxes appear to be, until you talk with the farmers. One led me to a field and thrust down a long bar, and inside fifteen minutes had shown me the location of five more concrete strongholds. They are covered with three feet of earth, and will likely be there for years to come.

Parvillers looks as if it had not recovered from the war. The church is repaired and the homes are rebuilt, but in the rough style of Damery, and the place is off the main highway and reached by muddy roads. In a field corner I found old trench heads, quite deep bays, and much rusting old wire.

WARVILLERS was our next stop, and it belongs to the genuine Picardy group. There are old apple trees, old houses, old shrines, an old church, old roofs. All remind you of the best parts of Caix, and the ruins seem as pathetic. It is a timid, retiring little town, with the most hospitable people. We were invited into a home and served hot coffee, then had rosy red Canadian

apples passed to us, a real treat. They enjoyed giving them. They told us they are able to buy them very cheaply this winter, and they taste much better than their home-grown ones. Three little girls came in shyly and were all introduced as Marie.

Beaufort is another very quaint old place. Trees hover and shield it, and the old low houses support each other. The first home on the left had three layers of tiles and moss on it, and three windows and a door in its long plain wall, each heavily shuttered. Then a big door opened into a cow stable, and on the grass in front sat harrows and other implements. The other homes were the same—very old and primitive, built sideways on to the street, which curved gently, with every other door a stable, blocked by carts and plows. On the right, an old building had holes in the wall like worn clothing, and a big new brick barn seemed an intruder. Paths lead through the trees that seem part of the village, and it is a curious old spot.

Folies shows more ruins and more signs of war than Beaufort, but it is a pretty spot. A funeral was in progress, the priest acting as director. All the people were walking, and boys dressed in white gowns carried crosses and banners. The horses that drew the hearse had embroidered blankets on them. It was a beautiful sight as they went under the trees and into the churchyard. Later we saw the mourners come back into the village, and soon they were in the cafés, as thirsty as if they had endured a hard day. In no time they were having as enjoyable a time as guests at an Irish wake.

We went on toward Le Quesnel. There is a big wood and an old château, most picturesque, old mud walls to some buildings, ancient brick and stone, whitewashed and venerable. A sign points to Manitoba Cemetery; then there are more hedges and gardens, and apple trees and copses, geese and ducks. There is good hunting in the wooded parts; and the rest is hoary with age and moss, as romantic as Picardy can be.

Le Quesnel station is surrounded by stacks and manure heaps, and there are

perfect concrete machine-gun posts. You can see in the village many old billeting signs, another château, the old church, the memorial, and the main square with many trees spaced like a big boulevard. It is a lovely spot in the sunshine.

In the café at which we stopped we were told of the Canadian soldier who stole a goose and bought one. The searchers could do nothing as he could prove he had paid for the one they saw, and madame, who was cooking it, did not reveal the secret. He was Scotch, that soldier. He took care, first, to find out that madame and the goose owner were bad friends, and so he was quite safe. But now they are friends again, madame has told what really happened, and, as the loser was paid for her loss, all is well.

We were shown the marks on a corner where a drunken staff officer piled his big car as he came through the village at breakneck speed. He hurdled a wheelbarrow and struck the corner at an angle instead of direct or he would have been killed.

You see many ruins about the village yet, and shrapnel scars on houses. The Canadian Memorial is nearer the main road. It is a grey stone with lettering, but the grounds are well kept and beautiful with holly and sumach.

BEAUCOURT is another small place with nothing distinctive. There are a few ruins and new houses, and the usual church and Mairie and memorial. There are many apple trees about, and a few old walls that bear both German and British names. There are some big barns and many stacks, and it seems a prosperous village. But we heard no tales of war and so went on to Maison Blanche, past a few Nissen huts and into a wooded stretch.

There are war ruins in sight on both sides, and many battery positions can be located in the woods. I found one place that had a solid concrete foundation, and logs crossed over it as if to let some weight go over. The logs were rotted and the corrugated iron was bent and crumpled. We wandered about and found several pits and places where

some guns had been, and signs of an old road once leading to the positions. It is a most interesting place in which to probe.

Domart has a lumber mill and many new homes. There are shrapnel scars on the walls of the old ones, and Nissen huts along the route.

Hangard brought back many memories. It is difficult to realize that the valley once held trenches and battery positions. Hangard is where the C. M. R's took 375 prisoners with a total of only sixty-three casualties. We crossed over by the old bridge, and I remembered the pontoon one on which we swayed that morning of August 8. Up among the big trees behind, you can still see stubs that were killed by shrapnel.

We went over the hills toward the valley where our company captured a German battery. There is an immense stretch of muddy grain field, wild when we crossed it, and then we were at the place, which is easily located. All along, the old dugout entrances have caved in as the farmers have removed the timbers, but each one can be found; and the hollows where the guns were, and where the dump was, are only weed-filled and grassed over. It is easy to locate the spot where the 49th captured an entire German battery before the gunners could remove the breech blocks or damage the guns in any way.

Back at the village we saw many postcards of the Somme on sale, and were told that many Canadians return each year and visualize that crossing at Hangard.

Gentelles Wood seems as big and dense as ever, but I could find no trace of the trenches that were in front. It is easy to go through the thickets and scare rabbits from your path. Kick around the tree roots and old leaf mold and you will find, here and there, old bully tins, a mess tin cover or a petrol tin. Outside, headed toward Amiens, I saw a few concrete emplacements. There is a cemetery on the right, and then you are in Boves.

Boves is a big town and a busy place, with clean sidewalks and attractive shop windows and all the bustle befitting a

place so near to Amiens. There are gendarmes' headquarters, a new Hôtel de Ville, and a fine villa to see before you go on. Beside the road was a trio of gipsy vans occupied by Bohemians, with naked children in view. The men had slouched off to the town, but the women—black-haired and with jewelled earrings—were cooking something in pans over a fire. We paused and they came eagerly to tell our fortunes, but we were shy as there are many stories of the way these nomads make their living.

Soon we were within sight of Amiens. The city seems just as big as when it was so empty and echoing in '18. Captain Stuart Oswald has an office where you can hire cars with English drivers, and he sells a splendid map of all the Somme territory. In addition he is a most pleasant person, very eager to help whether there be profit or not. Any one wishing to go over the old areas should

consult him. An Australian runs a hotel that has a good name, and there are many in the city who speak English. It is a harum-scarum place in the evenings, with shouting and singing and much merriment and wild women.

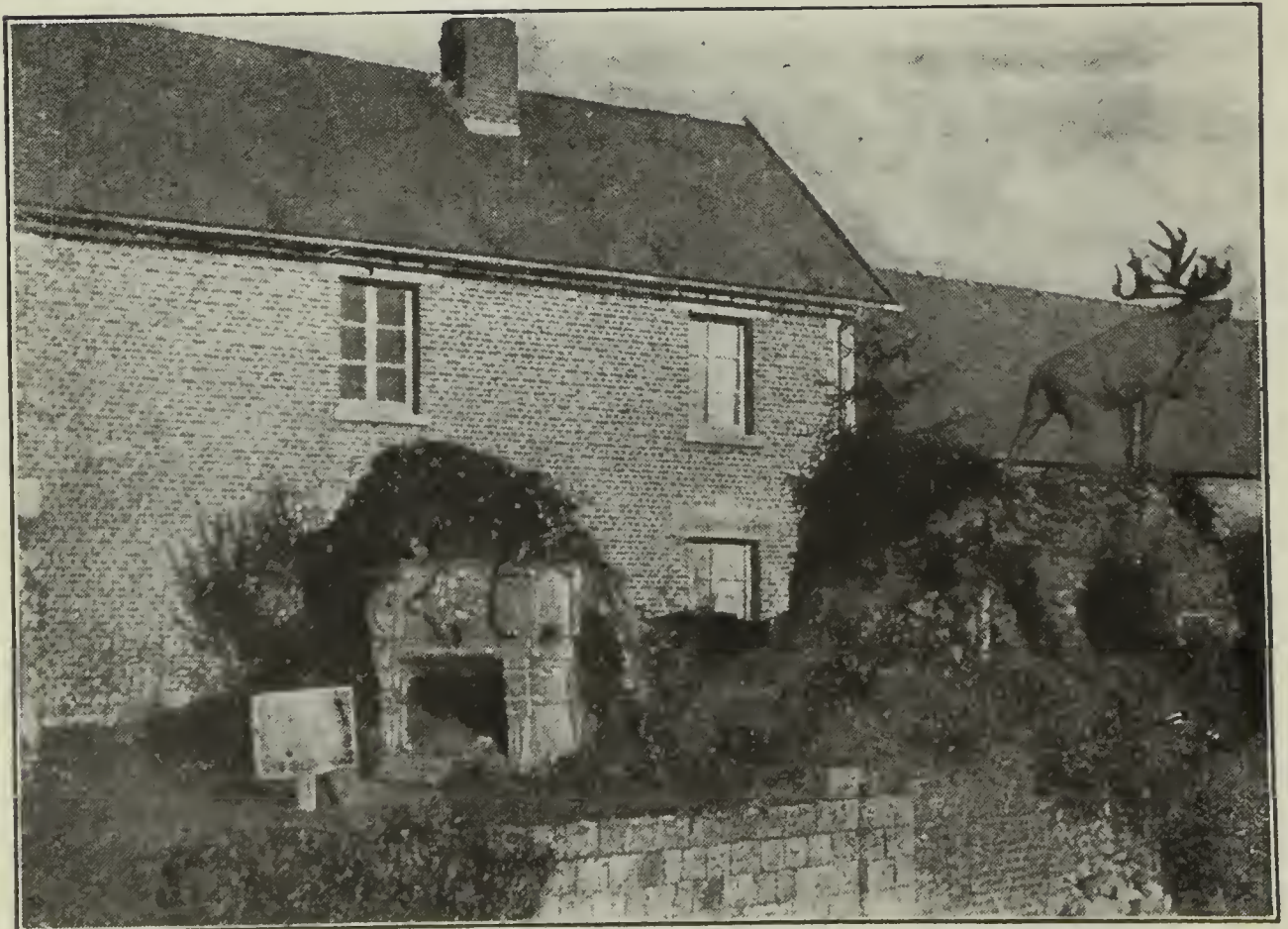
The cathedral is, of course, the main feature to see, but the old streets with the canal running between the houses and the street, crossed by bridges and affording the housewife a most convenient place in which to throw waste, is most interesting to those tired of buildings. In the place where we spent the hour before supper, we were told of three American deserters who hid in Amiens for three months until the end of the war, then posed as police for a time. Finally they put on French civvies and for two years remained in the city, employed as taxi drivers, in which employment they were very entertaining as they drove tourists over the battlefields.



A corner of the square in Le Quesnel. Manitoba Cemetery is near by.



"I have not seen another village in France with as many ruins as Eterpigny."



Monchy's caribou—Memento of the war activities of the Newfoundland Regiment.

CHAPTER XVI

ARRAS TO CAMBRAI

EVERY old battle area has its distinctions. Up Ypres way your landmarks are pillboxes, and Vimy has its dugouts and old trenches. On the Somme you find sunken roads and craters, and down in the Amiens territory old house ruins tell their own story. But on the slopes and in the hollows that form the wide path we made from Arras to Cambrai you find more signs of war than in any other part of France or Belgium. I do not speak of preserved grounds, such as Vimy or Hill 60, Sanctuary Wood or the grounds at Beaumont Hamel, but of an entire countryside. This whole Arras-Cambrai stretch is "war ground."

It's hard at times to find your way back to the exact spot. Old war maps are needed for every sector, and then you study them till your head reels, and tramp back and forth and round and round the hill or village or hollow, until at last you sense the lay of the land and have reached your objective.

"Long Alley," near Mercatel, was one such place. The old trench that was ours, the funk holes and dugouts in the bank of the sunken road, are still traceable, and you can enter two of the dugouts; yet to get a line on Long Alley proved too much for me until I went back a second day, just at dusk, and walked to the sunken road by the old route we used because the trench has vanished. Then I saw exactly where I should have gone—more to the left than I had anticipated—and in a short time had found three ten-yard sections of the old German trench. Long Alley, however, has been erased by plough and harrow.

Even the people seem different in this war region. They are a duller lot, almost stupid, it seems, from the effects of their struggle with war debris. One old man

told me of losing a fine colt down an old dugout shaft, of his son being killed by the exploding of a shell in the garden, and how another of his family died from blood poisoning, a scratch from old barbed wire. They hate the war, loathe it; don't want to talk about it at all.

LEAVING Arras by the Cambrai Road, once clear of the new brick buildings on the outskirts, the coal carts, bicycles and children, you veer to the right and take the Wancourt Road through Tilloy. Here is ground that was tunnelled extensively. In this neighborhood there are many stories of cave-ins, of deep cavities appearing overnight in backyards or on new footpaths, until time and again working parties have had to come and fill in sections of the underground. In the bank of the road, as you go through a sunken portion, old bits of iron posts, a rail, and corrugated iron stick out, and there are three bashed-in entrances to old dugouts.

At the entrance to the village a wooden hut is the first building on the left, and about it is corrugated iron, on edge to serve as a fence for the dooryard. The street is muddy and dirty with no walks, and the houses are not pretty. On the right there is one with walls of dirty grey; rough concrete spread over the bricks. Then a little store thrusts out; simply another drab brick edifice with a big window in one corner and a litter of articles, soap, pipes, caps and china ornaments, jumbled in the wooden ledge. There are five houses in a row on the right, seemingly a mass of crude red walls. Then an estaminet thrusts forth to border the street, and it flaunts an impressive Byrrh advertisement.

Step inside, order un café, and scan the occupants. A motor bike is parked

outside and the rider—a pale youth wearing a leather coat, check cap, tan shoes and a cigarette—is trying to make love to the mademoiselle who acts as barmaid. She is pretty in a small way, with good complexion, but has a gaping hole in her stocking just above her shoe. An old man sits at one table sipping beer. He wears a limp blue cap and corduroy, and has a walrus mustache; he has spilled some of his beer as his hands shake all the time. Two men in shining black suits and rusty bowler hats have leaned their enormous stomachs against the counter and are tossing dice in a leather mug to see who pays for the drinks. They have a set of rings which they place on a post, one or two according to the luck of the toss, and he who first gets rid of his twelve rings is the winner.

In the corner, on a long wooden seat against the wall, a young chap with a flashy tie and spats is flirting valiantly with a painted girl. She is probably from Arras, out to see what may be found in the suburbs. The old man mutters that it is dull weather, and you agree with him. He looks up sharply as you speak, and the two with bowler hats put the dice down.

"Canada!" they say. "Ah, I knew some from there. Two of them used to come to our farm at Mingoal to buy bread. And some of your men stole a dog I had, a young one with good blood in him. I would not have lost him for two hundred francs . . ."

So it goes, as long as you wish to stay.

Straight ahead, at the end of the street, which branches right and left, is Tilloy Wood—young growth with plenty of gnarled old stubs among it.

Back to the Cambrai Road again, and we come to a walled water hole. There is always one or two in every village, usually swarming with ducks and geese which make a great commotion as the farmers water their horses. Over to the left is a great barn built of corrugated iron and unpainted. Hundreds of sheets are used to make one wall. On the left skyline is Summit Trench Cemetery, and in a field I see an old dugout entrance. Two more are farther over, and both have a circle of barbed wire about them

to prevent sheep or cattle getting trapped.

We pass four big farms, squares of brick buildings, house and stable joining, sheds and all, with the midden in the centre, crowded with fowl and pigs. On the left, on high ground, is an old quarry, and there are more dugout entrances and old brick ruins and cellars. Feuchy Chapelle Cemetery is left behind, then a memorial to some British troops, and a demarcation stone is just beyond. You see more remnants of brick walls, and cellars, stray bits of barbed wire, old dugouts, rough ground that once was a trench or strong point, filled in mostly but never levelled.

CROSS a space with wide fields on either side and you are at the Monchy Windmill Cemetery, a small plot beside the mill, which is now run by electricity. Go past the crossroads where the Monchy-Wancourt Road crosses the main one, and turn right down the Guemappe trail. A windmill is on your right, distinct among a regular hedge of steel posts with drooped, curved arms, decorated with numberless wires, telegraph and telephone lines. In front, on the far slopes, white train smoke rolls back like cotton batting, and a road stretches like a dirty grey ribbon. You cross an old army light railway used by the French to haul sugar beets to their factories, and reach the outskirts of the village, with its allotment of wooden huts and corrugated iron.

There are the usual estaminets, big gardens with high brick walls about them, enormous long barns with great doors opening on the street and a litter of straw and manure for people to pass over. Farm implements are parked just clear of traffic and seemingly will winter there. There is another water hole, and the usual ducks, more green iron fences, the regular French village memorial, and the few village pumps are padded with straw as a protection against frost. Down below the village there is low, wet, flat ground with rank rushes, and old barbed wire tufted in one or two spots, and wire stakes protruding.

If you leave Arras by Ronville way you see much the same sort of country.

Here and there are covered-in places where the old tunnels have caved in, and you see many ruins, cellars and old dug-out entrances, also a few traces of trenches. There is much use of corrugated iron, many huts and concrete walls, the Mairie and the memorial. The old war road that used to cross the hollow and emerge at a farmyard is closed, however, and the farm is walled in. Telegraph Hill is on the left. It is a long walk up there over rough ground, but you can still find a few signs of the network of trenches about it.

Pass Neuville Vitasse Cemetery, a café and a sunken road, and you are in the village. You will remember that in war days there used to be a sign stuck in a rubble of brick and debris: "This is Neuville Vitasse." It was needed then to make you sure of the location. There is no such need today. It is one of the usual towns, Mairie, memorial, church and all, with its farms, huts and corrugated iron. In one of the estaminets I met a French veteran—of Verdun, of course—who had explored the few dug-outs that still survive at Telegraph Hill, and he offered to show them to me.

We went back up the long trail, and did find two foul holes. One has to be careful in exploring such places. I have been down several, and each time I got out I decided that it was a crazy stunt and I would not go down another. The French who first returned to the land removed all the timber supports from the entrance, working inward instead of first getting those in the dugout proper. As a result many of the places have caved in and are but well-like cavities about fifteen feet deep.

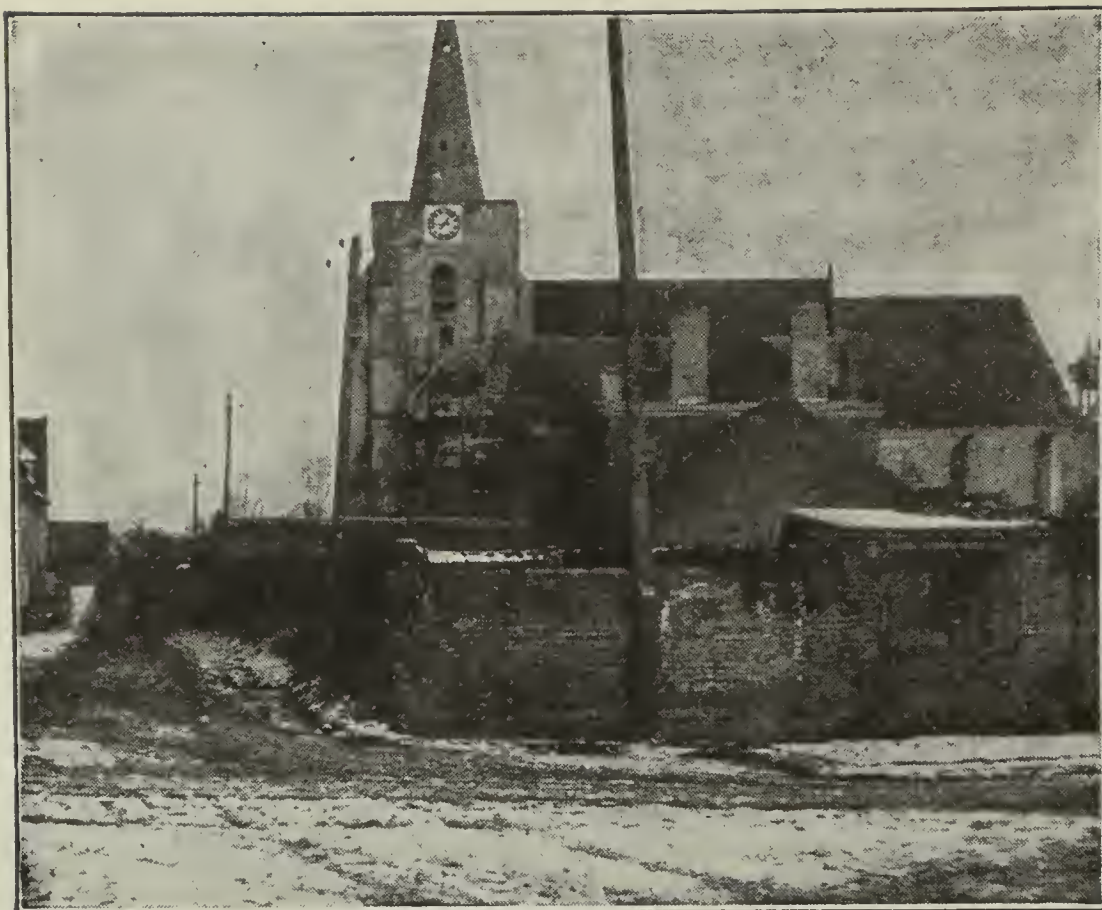
BEAURAINS is but another of the same sort as Tilloy and Neuville Vitasse. Its estaminets were barren of information, and I found nothing in the place of special interest.

Wancourt is different. Some men were making an excavation on the site of ruins. They shovelled up old brick and splintered timbers, and showed me two bayonets and a flattened helmet they had unearthed. In one of the fields near by they found two German dogs that had been killed by bullets. This was in 1920, when the first efforts at

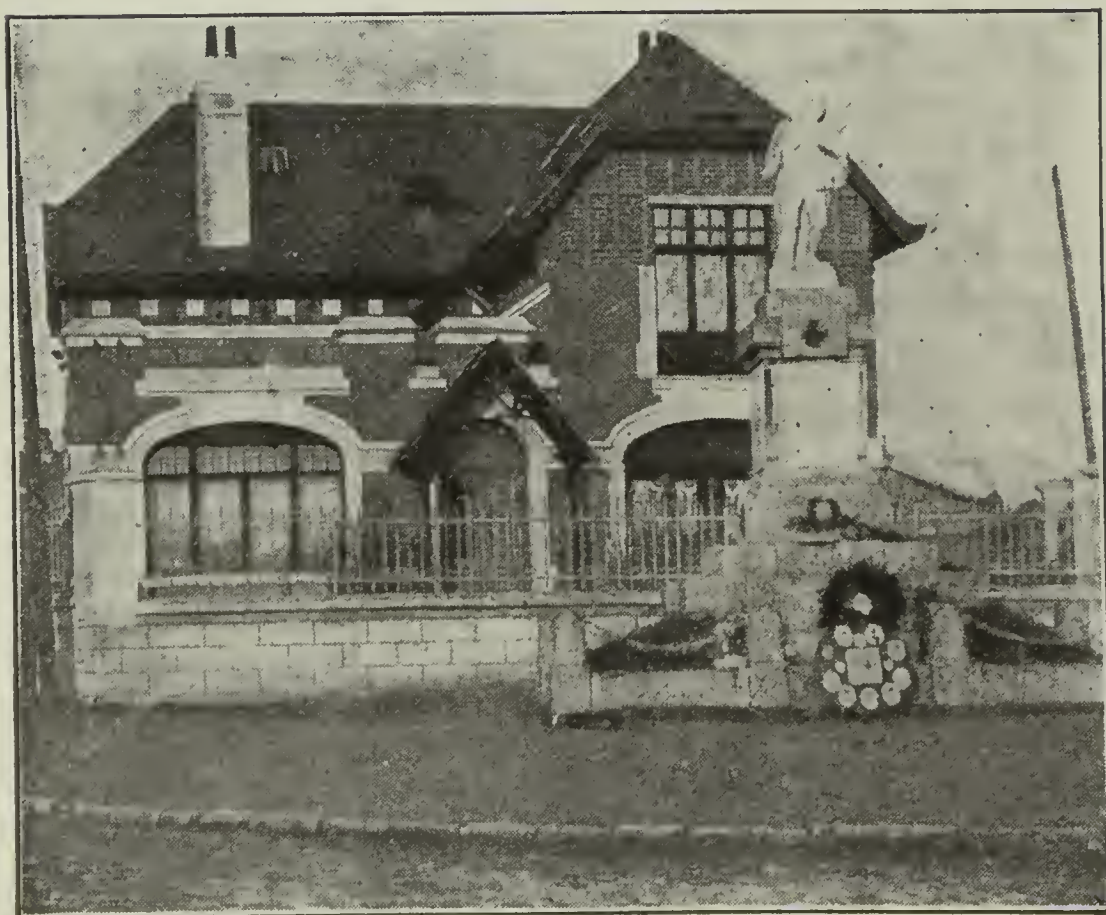
farming were made, and one of the dogs had a message carrier still attached to his neck. They had handed it in without looking inside the case. All around Wancourt you can find sunken roads with dugout entrances and funk holes in the banks, and old concrete emplacements. I went just outside the village, along a small stream, and found four in succession. The villagers have tried to blow up—or down—two of them, but the remaining pair are unharmed—great squares of concrete and steel, massive reminders of the past.

It was in an estaminet at Wancourt that I was told of a balky mule which, left where it stood to change its mind, began kicking and directly went aloft, having kicked a buried five nine. And in a field near by I saw a scarecrow dressed in an unusual fashion. A German pot helmet crowned the effort, and a German tunic was on the body. Where they came from I never learned, but along the old grass above the emplacements you may see at least three half-buried German steel lids.

When you get uphill again so that the cock on Guemappe Church steeple is striding the skyline, you are on the Cambrai Road and close to Vis en Artois. The site of the old sugar factory is littered with holes and old brick, but every vestige of wall has gone. You can see, however, all along that entire slope, where many dugouts and trenches have been. Vis en Artois is a most colorful place. That "colorful" is a correct word. Nowhere else in the district can you find so many shades of concrete, painted, of course, though I think that pink and blue predominate. The garage is a flare of modern hues, and some of the villas, spick and span, have at least six tints. There are tans and yellows, orange and green, and many salmon pinks. The memorial has a fine position in front of a modern bungalow, and farther down the street are many fancy homes, some in stucco, all nicely painted, with imposing fences and gates in front. Concrete rules supreme. In the heart of the village stands a unique church built with an up-and-down futurist effect, a large school, the Mairie, and the Hôtel de Ville. It is a regular centre of concrete.



The church at Agnez Duisans is still undergoing repair.



Vis en Artois has a memorial—and plenty of new paint.

In the Café Pont Olivier we found pleasant company, and were exceedingly entertained by a grizzled farmer and a touring Englishman who was a member of the Army Service Corps during the war.

The A.S.C. man had one good story. It was in some hut back of the lines, and the night was cold and wet. The place was quite crowded in the vicinity of the one stove, and the topic under discussion was dreams. A mud-weary front-liner stumbled in, pack and all. He was Blighty bound on leave, and had come in to get thawed out. No one made a move to let him get beside the fire. Came a lull in the tales, and he spoke up. "I had a queer dream myself," said the front-liner. "I thought I'd got mine and went to hell." He paused, and voices chorused: "What was it like?" "Just like here," shot back the answer. "I couldn't get near the fire for blinkin' A.S.C. chaps."

There's a gendarmerie headquarters at Vis en Artois, so we didn't go probing about the few ruins behind wooden huts at the outskirts. There was a big farm near by, and a threshing machine filled the air with dust. Beer was being passed around to thirsty workers, of whom one-third were women. And down near a crossroad at another farm, two red-faced, bony women were laboriously loading manure into a cart. We turned into the road at the right and went along an open space, and saw many old war spots along a sunken road.

Soon we were in Cherisy, and it is a dirty town. The Mairie, post-office and majority of the homes are ugly buildings. Brick and concrete dominate, but the concrete is unpainted and the whole is decorated at all angles with sheets of corrugated iron. The street is vile and there are no walks, so one treads past barn doors in otherwise blank walls, through duck puddles and manure drainage, seeing as you go along a peasant type that seems only fitted to serve as beasts of burden. The town has its feature—pigeons. They are there in hundreds instead of dozens, settling on barns and sheds in groups and rows, and flying in great flocks in the fields, vying with the clouds of crows and fewer magpies.

IN ESTAMINET DUMONT we talked with the madame, straining her intelligence with questions of the German occupation. Yes, she remembered them well as they stole boots if one left them about. She did not like them and never would. On and on she rambled, muttering to herself some of the time, and I gathered that the civilians of Cherisy had a pretty thin time with jolly old Otto and Fritz. Then, overnight, the invaders had got word to move, and all were ousted the next day. She showed a picture, a long, framed one, showing Cherisy in the days before the war when it was a quaint village with trees and white-walled houses, low-roofed and comfortable-looking.

We left her to her muttering and went up hill to the caves in which we sheltered in '18. It was easy to find the quarry, but a man there told us that the cave entrances had been closed and we could not see them. He said that after the war two soldiers were found down there after they had been lost two days. They had taken refreshments and food and hidden there, and could not get out again. There I found the same sunken road we used in going to the canteen at Cherisy, and it was there that I sat on a fallen tree and watched a German airman explode one of our balloons that had been made up for his benefit. There was a dummy in the basket, and powerful explosives at the top of the balloon. The trap worked, but not well enough. The airplane dived and fell, fluttering like a moth, but the German regained control before it hit the ground and streaked for home.

The cemetery at Cherisy is still in ruins, an example of the spirit of the place. There was a wood on our right as we went on to Fontaine les Croiselles, another ugly village with huts and corrugated iron standing as eyesores everywhere. The Mairie is ugly, and the church is built of drab concrete blocks. The town water hole is not fit to bathe a mule in, so filthy does it smell. On the right are many traces of trenches and old posts and battery positions. You follow a deep sunken road past a communal cemetery into an open with more woods on the right, and see the church of Remy on the skyline.



Just outside Wancourt—"great squares of concrete—pillboxes."



Old German army signs still adorn the walls at Recourt.

Hendecourt is another spiritless village, dirty and ill-favored, with more corrugated iron, more bony, apathetic women, drab estaminets, and ducks.

Cagincourt showed more stir, seemed more awake, but it has its own share of old shell holes, trench ruins, broken walls, cellars and corrugated iron. One huge farm is new, but the gate posts are battered war relics and very conspicuous. We went on, after a fruitless quest of the estaminets, past a shrine, more huts and ruins, and by Quarry Road Cemetery. More huts and ruins, and old war ground, gullied and gouged and cratered, and you are in Queant.

A big sugar factory is the main feature of this place. Go by the old cellars, new church and Hôtel Restaurant, and you are on the site of the old field hospital, with the cemetery close by to assure you you are right.

Pronville came next, a village of small houses and dogs and dirty women. We stopped a while at the Café de la Place, and were told an amazing story of a German there who had two wives. One came and visited him for a few weeks and then the other came, and the soldiers told the people of Pronville that neither of the wives suspected the existence of the other. One vitriolic old dame got the address of one and promptly wrote to her, telling all, as soon as Pronville was freed of all German menace.

As we left the village on our way to Inchy en Artois we saw a woman working in an excited fashion about a hole in a ditch bank. We stopped to investigate. It was an old dugout entrance. It had been filled in in the usual manner of the Poles who cleared and levelled the war areas at so much per acre, and now had swallowed the surface stoppage and yawned like an evil pit. Down this hole her dog had fallen. He had scrambled to a sort of ledge but could not get higher, so we got a ladder from the nearest barn and lowered it. The dog came up the rungs like a circus performer, and madame fell on his neck and wept over him. Far down, by light of a flashlight, we could see a steel helmet; that was all. A man who came past told us that there were at least five similar holes within a mile of his home.

INCHY EN ARTOIS will tell anybody that it suffered war. Go around it in any direction and you will see old cavities and trench gullies, and in the village are ruins and cellars and shrapnel-scarred walls. Two villas are rather pretty homes in such a setting, and there are the usual estaminets and water hole and memorial. On you go, and the ruins increase. I counted thirty-two cellars and ruins from where I stood on a high bank, and there are many, many more. Broken walls and shattered concrete show everywhere, and when you get to the Canal du Nord itself you see it as you saw it in '18. There does not seem to be a thing changed or repaired. Broken and shattered brick and upheaved concrete are everywhere, and old posts and shelters and dugouts are as they were left when the battle passed on. I visited over twenty old pits and shelters within two hundred yards. Any one who wants to see what the war did to the canal should visit it by way of Inchy.

Sains lez Marquion is a continued story. More ruins, more old cellars, more gaps in the line of houses. At one place only the gate-posts remain, huge sentinels of a site where only the foundations of some grand home remain. There are many wooden huts, painted in gay blues and browns and yellows, and there is one barn so long that it has three sets of doors opening into the street. We stopped by a ruin, looking about, and saw a rat clambering over the bricks. In the estaminet we told of what we had seen, and were informed that Sains and Inchy had plenty of rats, that they came from the canal. After the war, so we were told, rats came as if called by a piper, and there had been a long battle with them.

Past the church, down a narrow street, and then we came to some very modern-looking houses in painted concrete and in stucco, then a huge farm with a third of its front still in ruins but with the remainder of the great square of brick walls and buildings restored. Six Nissen huts in a row and we are in the open, with big trees on the left and a huge open space on the right. Soon we pass a cemetery, and then are entering Marquion.

Marquion is a big town filled with flaring signs and advertisements. There are nice villas, two châteaux and many yellow and pink concrete homes, but the old flour mill is still a wreck and the mill wheel is gone. Down by the old mill stream you can meet pretty girls for the first time or as many times as you like. We saw a bevy of them there, and a worn path near big trees proved that it was a regular meeting place. On the wall near by was the old familiar black and white lettering that Heinie used. "Minenwerfer Jetzt Werkstatt," and a bit farther on another sign said, "Minenwerfer Park." Many of the old houses have German billet signs on them. These have been painted over but are coming to light again. The signs remind me of one I saw on the other side of Cambrai, where Fritz had made use of a culvert as a shelter during air raids. On it was the inscription, "Understan." Next it was the lettering, "Zum Do," and a wag had painted after it in scrawling letters, "Some Don't." The old army R. E. bridge served at Marquion until eighteen months ago, but is now replaced by a French one.

We went to the left on our way back to Arras and saw Baralle quite near, its white steeple and red roofs making it seem a pretty village. Then a new brewery blocks the view, an immense place with many trucks in front. It was now wide open country, with long slopes and hills. After two long dips and rises we were at Villers lez Cagincourt, with plenty of wet ground about, and a sugar factory.

In an estaminet there we heard the British blamed for something new. During my wanderings I have heard them get full credit for the present depression, the fall of the French franc, the length of the Great War, for anything and everything except this one. They were talking of somebody who had been poisoned by mushrooms, which are very plentiful in France at all places where we had our horse lines. You can find any old horse lines you wish by such indications. "The English, I am sure," said a very stout madame, "put poison on the ground, as they knew they would never get the mushrooms themselves."

WE LEFT her and her pleasantness and went up another grade to the Dury Canadian Memorial, a very simple site beside the road, quite suitable I suppose, but making one feel that Canada had got it and similar sites at Hill 62, Passchendaele, Le Quesnel and Courcellette at bargain prices. They are all the same, like a hub on a wheel, and the one at Dury has not got even the saving grace of a good situation.

We went up past Windmill Cemetery, where a windmill stood in those awful autumn days, peopled with German machine gunners who slaughtered the 12th Brigade as they rushed up the long Dury slopes. The only building on the main road is the Café of Hope, known as a landmark for miles around. A big farm and two cemeteries meet you as you enter Dury, and there is a brick home covered completely with vines, like an English house. There are many wooden huts, a nice memorial, the usual water hole, a Café de la Mairie, the Mairie, two villas, ruins, a concrete house painted a light tan shade, a huge barn, and more ruins. At its farther corner Dury looks as it did in 1919—ruins and a few new buildings.

And now you are entering a district redolent of '18. I have not seen another village in France or Belgium with as many ruins as there are in Eterpigny. You can count fifty on two streets, and some of these have walls yet standing. There are far more ruins than rebuilt homes in the village and, to make the wreckage more distinct, one of the rebuilt places is a large and grand chateau. A very long brick building in the centre, and, aside from the ruins, you have seen Eterpigny. I set up the camera to take a picture and an old woman came hobbling to me. "Take care," she said, "you may drop in a hole. There are old tunnels and cellars everywhere. See." She showed me a spot I had not suspected, a straw pile covering a tunnel entrance that her husband was using as a turnip cellar. Ruins, ruins, ruins! They rear on all sides, surround the few homes and leer. Walls with windowless holes, walls with doorways intact, and squares without roofs. Desolation, wreckage, disaster—war!

At the Estaminet la Bellevue it was startling to find an English veteran, apparently a down-an-outer. He told me he lived in Bethune but was visiting this village.

This devastated area includes Remy. At the road corner there is a concrete emplacement of immense thickness, and all across the little brook valley are ruins without end—jagged walls, peeping pill-boxes, old craters, bits of trenches, wreckage. Go over the bridge and the wall ruins rise in long points and arches. The church has a nice white steeple, but the building itself is partly hidden behind another brick house. In the centre, surrounded by many more ruins, you find the memorial in front of a newly painted concrete house that is both the Mairie and the village school.

Haucourt blends with the other villages, makes a trio one will not easily forget. There are not so many ruins as at Remy and Eterpigny, but more craters and old trenches and shelters. You can get into several of them if you wish to risk cave-ins, and there are numberless jumbles of old brick and wood that have been soldiers' homes in the past. At one place you can find the old front line almost as it was. The ground is so pitted and gouged in places that it may be years before any effort is made to restore it as farms and gardens.

HAUCOURT is another specialist in concrete. The memorial, its fence and the church are fine examples, and many homes boast concrete fronts. Near the church there is a shrine of concrete made in imitation of a cave or grotto, a most unusual feature in such surroundings. You pass Nissen huts, ruins and wooden huts around a crooked street with many new brick buildings, long walls and a crucifix, and are in Vis en Artois again, dazed by its flaring colors.

Turn right again as you leave the village and you are soon in Boiry Notre Dame. It is another village you will not quickly forget, as its huts are legion. Wooden ones and Nissen ones are mingled in a regular village of huts and corrugated iron. A wooden one sports a Café Tabac sign and several are now in use as homes. There is a stone church, huge farms, a memorial, many ruins,

and stony, hilly ground with a windmill at the crest and a ruin beside it, probably the former mill.

In the estaminet of the village square we heard a Frenchman tell of one fat German there who had Hoch der Kaiser tattooed on his fat tummy. Whether he was awarded an extra Iron Cross or not for his achievement, the Frenchman did not know.

More ruins, sunken roads and woods. Bois du Vert, Bois du Sart on the map, but one long stretch up a slope is what I've always called Jigsaw Wood. I roamed around until at last I was on the location of our exploits in '18. I found the sunken road by which we came to the trenches we stayed in during the night, relieving the 58th Battalion. Up the bank you can still find many of the old gullies that were German trenches and old dugout entrances. Up over the long rise you can trace the two trenches we rushed, and the big crater there is but the old emplacement of the big gun we captured, with a major and his crew.

We went up a long sunken road and into Pelves. There were many more concrete houses, and houses with concrete fronts and corrugated iron elsewhere, and wooden huts as well. It is a cheerless little village, with many traces of the war meeting one's gaze. Out in the fields a quartette of women were spreading manure, working without talking, looking like pictures of the peasant women of Russia.

Over on the right and very near is the village of Rouex, where such fierce fighting took place at the chemical works, but we keep on and go up into Monchy le Preux. In Monchy you have a wonderful view of all the countryside, and, standing there, you are unable to fathom how we ever captured the hill. Fritz could see every move made on any side for a distance of over two miles, and there is no natural cover for an attacking party. It is an ideal location for a strong point. And he had many. After seeing all the regular village features, I prowled into the backyard of a creamery, a big yard between it and a large building with a flaring advertisement painted across its entire end. There, facing me, was a huge concrete emplacement, walls four feet thick in places,

braced with steel rails, a place that looked as if it could withstand any shell made. I went down into it, down good steps, and found three chambers inside. It is a roomy place and commands the entire slope up which our men had to advance. In that place, one wonders more and more how it was possible to make such captures.

Going out, I found at a corner of ruins a memorial to the 37th British Division. Farther on, standing on a concrete post that the Germans constructed in the ruin, is a life-size caribou, a memorial to the Newfoundland regiment. It has a splendid location.

Monchy has many things to show one—old battle posts and cellars. Down

on the right, in rank weeds under some bushes, I found a steel helmet and mess tin, just as they had been tossed at some time in battle. All the way down to the main road again, to Tilloy, one keeps looking back at Monchy. It is a most imposing mark on the skyline. I've been days and days trying to get pictures of the caribou, but the sun will not shine. At the moment my feelings remind me of a story: A unit in the east had a semi-educated native sworn in as interpreter, but while they were at a distant point he disappeared. A letter to the colonel explained things. "To the Manager the British Army: Sir: My absence is impossible. Some one has removed my wife. Golly! I am annoyed."



Canadians entering Cambrai, October 9, 1918.

CHAPTER XVII

CAMBRAI REMEMBERS

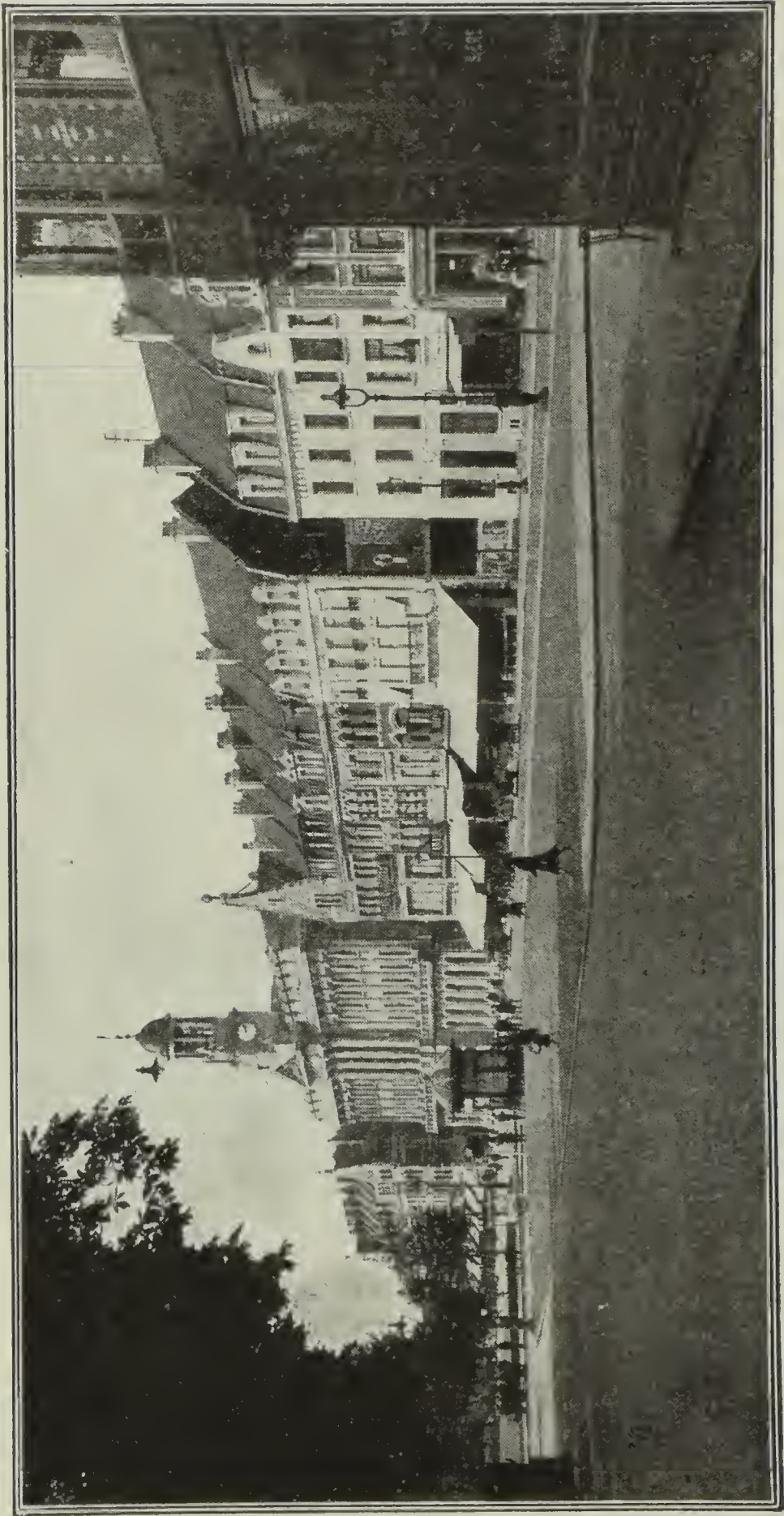
THE Cambrai sector is the most delightful of all to explore. The ruins continue as in the other villages nearer Arras, but there is far less corrugated iron on display, and the old wooden huts are fewer. And as you get within the bounds of the "Pas du Nord," you find a much cleaner region and places that are very orderly. Here you see signs warning motorists about schools near by, and the walks and streets are clean, and there are clean curtains in the windows, often flowers, and gardens and bowers worthy of Picardy. You see many new villas and the ordinary houses are well placed and of neat appearance. The people are intelligent and very friendly. Even in our old billet areas you do not get a kinder reception than in those villages near Cambrai.

The evidences of war are plentiful. Nowhere else will you see as many German signs still lettered on white walls, or find as many homes built on concrete emplacements. Pause in any of those places that face the sector near the canal and you will soon locate a rough concrete wall, either used as a house cellar or as a storehouse near the barn. And in the small woods and isolated corners you may find old trench ends with rotting duckboards at the bottom and sides of corrugated iron still holding firm, though in some cases pressed inward in a V shape. Old dugout entrances are but holes overhung with long grass and weeds, but go along some sunken road or bank that is a farm boundary and you come to a long pillbox with two or three entrances, a roomy set of chambers with two-foot walls as intact as when erected. And you will wonder all the more about the great drive the Canadians made in those autumn days of '18.

AFTER you leave Eterpigny you enter a wide tract of cultivated ground where only crows and their kind are seen. Here and there are scarecrows of the windmill type, a contrivance dressed like a man, and whirled with every current of air. They seem to have no effect on the crows who feed close by. While in one of the old bits of trenches, where I found a steel helmet minus its inside straps, and a jug top with S. R. D. lettered on it, as well as a shell box, I heard a sharp report and almost ducked. It sounded as if I had returned to realities. But no other shot was heard and so I relaxed. Later, when at the other end of the village, I heard the report faintly and then made enquiries. I was told that it was an arrangement the farmers had invented, detonators exploding small charges in the fields. These were fused by some clock system, a timing stunt, making the discharge every half hour. It was to scare the crows.

Over on the right there is a well-kept orchard, but the left ground is swampy, and two Nissen huts confront you as you enter Etaing. There are many stacks close to the village, almost hiding the small houses. Many have neat little gardens behind them, and the pumps are all bound with straw to protect them from the frost. Near the Mairie there are shrapnel marks on the wall, and you see a few ruins and old cellars if you make a round of the few streets. The newer houses have rough brick walls and there is little concrete. The church is a plain structure.

You leave the place by a sunken road and soon reach a café on a crest of the ridge. Behind it, adjoining it, is a huge pillbox, low in the ground with many twisted iron rods exposed. More wide open fields, and a wood on the right, be-



The Grande Place, Cambrai, 1932, is an imposing square.

fore the Communal Cemetery, and you reach Lecluse, almost hidden behind long walls. One long wall runs out to meet you, and half the village seems the same. Here and there are archways and if you peer inside the yards you will see that everything is clean and orderly and that there are quaint little flower beds and shady places under the trees.

The village borders a long marshy region, with much long grass and tall trees. Here and there are bits of water showing through, and in the sunlight it is a pretty spot, though it must be a breeding ground for mosquitoes. We leave via the inevitable sunken road, pass a small lake, cross another long, open flat, and are soon in Ecourt.

Here and there are old German billet signs, and houses that seem centuries old, quiet and quaint streets with here and there a gap in the wall of homes, a gaping cellar or broken wall, and some wooden huts in the rear as if pushed back when the soldiers went away. An old lady came from a small café and talked with us in a most gentle voice. She told us how she had suffered in war time when the Germans had killed all her poultry and had given her paper payment that she had not been able to cash, and how our airmen passed so close over the village that she was in mortal terror of being killed by bombs.

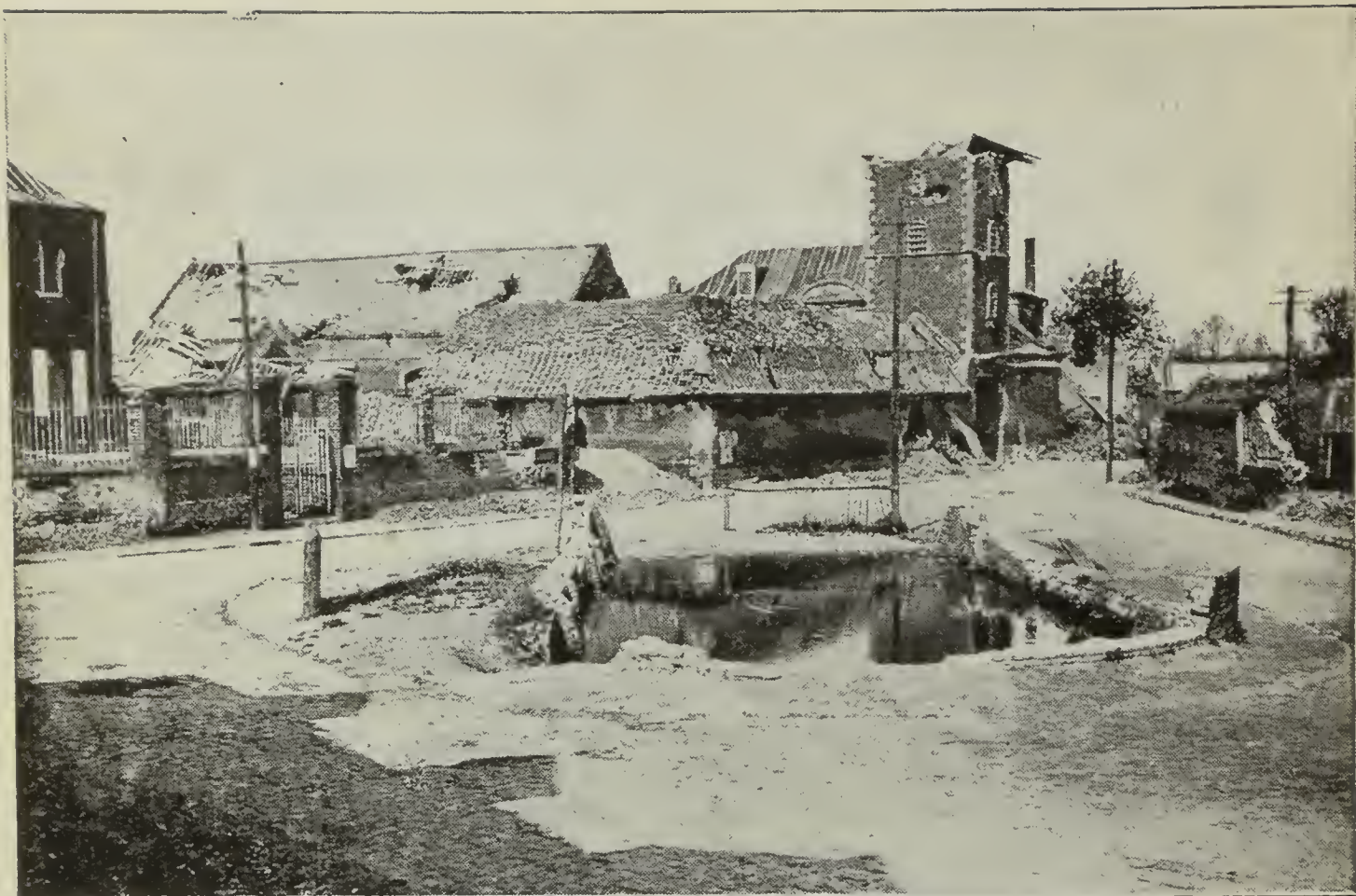
We left her and went on through Saudemont, a long village with rough cobbles and countless ducks. Ecourt, Saudemont and Rumancourt are so close to each other that they might be called one town, and it was in this district, defended by his impregnable Hindenburg line, that old Jerry had his stores, munitions and hospitals. The 4th Division advanced so swiftly that he had not time to remove them, and great booty was secured, as well as a complete hospital train. In his anger at such losses, the German commander turned all available guns on the villages—so far unmarked by war—and reduced them to ruins. The church at Ecourt was famed for its beautiful spire, but it was demolished in the first hour of shelling. Ecourt was the first village from which Canadian troops rescued long-imprisoned French people, forty-six of them, hidden in one

small cellar, being there seven days, as the Germans had issued orders that all must be completely evacuated immediately.

There are many small houses, and aged ones, in Saudemont, but there is no quaintness about the town. It lies in straitened manner, as if suffering, and some of the homes that are larger look severe, with narrow windows and doors, and too much iron about the gates and fences. The water hole was the only attraction for children, and the only ruins were at the far end near large barns. Many of the homes off the main street looked as if they should be there, and some cottages were quite picturesque. We found them as we went on to Recourt.

Recourt has no Mairie, no memorial, no church, no water hole. It consists of one white house, nine red ones, and a wooden hut, and has a cemetery by which it can be identified. There is a small track running by it on which a "San Fairy Ann" bustles about with small truck loads of sugar beets. The only outstanding feature of Recourt is a big German sign on a wall, a traffic direction.

WE WENT on to Rumancourt and found it a most interesting village. It was captured by the 44th Battalion, and much ordnance and material were left behind by the routed enemy. It is very pretty, with many tall trees to give it dignity, with long walls and old gardens, with old cottages and nice villas, with huge barns and cobbled streets, with English and German signs at different corners and on house walls. There is much German and British concrete in evidence and at one place a lady took us into a cellar that was a huge emplacement. She said it was built by the Canadians, but this hardly seems possible as they were not long in that locality. The concrete is massive and the people lived in some of these places while their homes were being built. There are many shrapnel-pitted walls and an old factory of some sort. Many tall trees around give it a pretty setting, and a long wall runs out at the right, and a cemetery is near.



Bourlon village shortly after its capture by the Canadians in September, 1918.



The Place of October 9th, Cambrai, so named in honor of the entry on that date of the Canadian Third Division.

One of the people came and told us that when the Germans were there they had ten British soldiers who were forced to work. These prisoners tried to escape, and were sentenced to be shot. They were made to dig their own graves and were toppled into them and roughly buried without a sign to show that they were there. After the war the people told the British about what had happened, but the bodies could not be located. As the authorities had learned that the story was true they got in touch with the German padre who was in Rumancourt at the time. He offered to come and locate the graves if he were given protection from the people, as this was just after the war when feelings ran high. The British got him in a car and brought him to the village and within ten minutes they had recovered the first body. All were found, and the padre returned safely. The ten men were buried in the French cemetery and it is with pride that they take you to the little plot, beautifully tended, and show you the stones.

We left the village, passing a German cemetery on the way, the second large one within a few miles, and saw a roadside chapel still in ruins. On its side were several German signs. A lake on the left adds beauty to the picture as you go on to Sauchy Cauchy. It is a pretty village, old and quaint and clean, with a few Nissen huts at the canal end. The canal is almost dry, a mere grey hollow like a long swamp.

SAUCHY LESTREE is next in line, with many new houses of different hues in concrete. There are browns and blues and browns and whites, and some homes are of odd structure. A bevy of guinea-fowl almost holds up traffic, and at a corner a new church is being built or an old one restored. At a café they show us Christmas cards they have received from Hamilton, Ontario, from two gunners who were there in '19 after the old folk had returned to the village. The photographs of the pair were on a shelf, and we wondered if a girl in Canada knew that her name was on the back of one, with a date of '15.

On the way out you pass a shrine and a British cemetery and then are at a

corner where another chapel is in ruins. This was called "Chapel Corner" in war days and the name is still used in the village. Epinoy is silhouetted on the left long before you reach it, and seems a pretty place, but once in you find that it cannot boast of more than a dozen nice homes and a very few quaint ones. There is too much red brick and concrete, and too many advertisements on the walls. But the people are pleasant and very friendly.

A veteran with one arm told us stories of how the Germans left a house in such fine condition that a party of artillerymen chose it for their billet. They were Canadians, and the table had a spread of dishes and bottles on it, as if the men had left a meal and meant to return. Several blankets were on the bunks and a bucket of coal by the grate. In the grate itself were kindlings and wood all ready to be lighted, and comfortable chairs invited many to sit around. The chairs were occupied and the match was struck when a sergeant entered and blew the flame out and made the men retire. He was an engineer, and the gunners were astounded as they saw him locate a big bomb in the chimney, just out of sight. The heat would have detonated it and the entire party would have been killed.

Leaving Oisy-le-Verger, flash a few white walls and red roofs on the left, and then we are in Sancourt, a very pretty village, clean and whimsical, with shade trees and gardens, and little lanes in between the larger buildings. It was here that the 72nd Battalion captured more prisoners than their entire battalion strength.

Neuville St. Remy is another of these northern villages that please the eye. More vines on houses, some on a ruin, low roofs, broad walks, cleanliness everywhere, and shrapnel marks so common in all that area. And the army left its painted traffic directions.

Tilloy is on a small ridge, sharply drawn against the skyline, showing a squat tower and a succession of roofs that do not vary. There are no trees, nothing outstanding, and so we go on past old farms and long white walls,

and new homes and gardens, cross the canal, and are in Cambrai.

Cambrai has changed her heart. The outskirts have all the queer-angled streets, amazing one-way traffic, and triangular spaces as of old, but all the centre has been remodelled. Broad streets and boulevards cut through in straight directions where rows of houses used to stand. When old Fritz tried to destroy the city he really helped the civic fathers to put the place on the map. It is known far and wide as the most modern in appearance of any place on the Arras side of Valenciennes.

The pavement is smooth and the streets so wide that you can easily imagine you are in America, and the store fronts in the rebuilt part are very up-to-date. The "Place of October Ninth," has a fine memorial, and an inscription tells you that the place was named in honor of the entry of the Canadian 3rd Division, in '18. The Grande Place is very pretty, with fine trees, and fine buildings. The centre has a park-like safety zone for pedestrians, and a news stand with many small trees near the seats. In front of the cathedral the lawn is a series of squares and corners, with walks in and out among them, and small trees here and there. The new Hôtel de Ville is a very fine building, and off the Grande Place you find that the "Porte of Paris," with its two towers, is still an attraction. Under the trees on the right, a sort of boulevard, there is the market place, and there we saw the gendarmes set the merchants to cleaning up all litter as soon as they moved their stalls at noon. Cambrai is clean.

We left the city by a route that took us to Morenchies, a village captured by the R. C. R.'s after most strenuous fighting—and found that many ruins still existed on the outskirts, and that many of the surviving homes were drab affairs. A ruined archway seems ready to topple into the street, and there is another ruin with a square of windowless walls. The openings are covered with barbed wire to prevent any one entering, and the place looks to have been in that condition since 1918. Where the trees begin to line the roadway and a brook, the scene

changes and there are many white walls and new houses. Some have flaring painted concrete and others are more modest. Market gardens increase and you are in Morenchies without ever having left what seemed a long street. Its chief distinction is a big factory, and a house with sky-blue shutters; then you are over the canal and among plenty of ruins and wooden huts and Nissen ones, with concrete fronts and shrapnel-punctured walls. You pass a British cemetery and are in Ramillies, with plenty of guinea-fowl about and much evidence of shelling.

Another of those sunken roads, and soon you reach Cuvillers, a village that will be remembered by the 16th Battalion, which took it only after bitter fighting. It is a small place and clean, but with no beauty. There is a factory, and several barns of wooden sides and corrugated iron roofs. The houses are small but there are several old farms with long wide barns and ancient gateways. Leaving by a sunken road again, you reach Bantigny, and remember that the 14th Battalion had a most strenuous session in that neighborhood.

Bantigny is a typical village of that Cambrai area. It has many quaint old houses, some patched since the war ended, many small houses that are covered with vines, many concrete fronts that look very much out of place, many concrete emplacements hidden by new homes. But there are trees and pretty gardens, and a small brook that adds its beauty, and it is a very peaceful-looking spot thirteen years after. Another most quiet, respectable old place, with high walls and white walls and shrapnel marked walls, is Abancourt. It has painted white over the German black letters, and also tried to erase our army signs, but ruins are still there.

Sancourt, entered from the Abancourt, route, is prettier than before, with old white walls and vine-covered walls and quaint gardens, but we pass on until we reach a sign Ici Haynecourt. Haynecourt is a plain village, with a sugar factory to keep it so. The church sports a clock, and the first estaminet a large bulldog. In this resting place we saw a stout old lady come in and heard her say

that she was tired and thirsty. We believed the "thirsty" part. She called for un demi, and another, and another, and another, and another, and emptied them all, five glasses of beer in quick succession. Shortly after she went out to study the weather.

There are many pretty hedges about Haynecourt, and two large houses under a grove of tall trees. A very old woman was working in the fields, hobbling about, spreading manure, and looked to be at least seventy years old.

A British cemetery, and water tower, then we were reading Ici Saily. We keep on, now travelling toward Cambrai again, and pass a cemetery on the right, many advertisements of hotels and garages and restaurants in the city, and are at St. Olle. The quaint old village in which the 1st C. M. R.'s saw such bitter fighting has a feature of its own, wells instead of the usual pumps. They are old stone-rimmed affairs, quaintly roofed, all of the same pattern, with a squeaking and aged windlass and long rope. It is a small village of very small houses, many of them ancient-looking, very clean.

Petite Fontaine Notre Dame comes next and then we are in Fontaine Notre Dame itself, a long straight street that is the Cambrai-Bapaume Road, with back streets that have many pretty homes and fine villas. On the left a road leads to Masnières, where the Newfoundland Memorial repays one for the extra mileage—a most beautiful setting for the caribou, having a background of young trees.

AND now Bourlon Wood is on the right, and on the left the village of Anneux, perched on high ground. Bourlon Wood looks thick and impassible, with old stubs here and there, and the fringe of it is gouged by sandpits or gravel pits. We turn right and go around the wood and into Bourlon village, which was captured by the Canadians, September 27, 1918. It is downhill, past wooden huts and Nissen huts and more wooden huts. There are more huts in Bourlon than any other village we had seen since Boiry Notre Dame; there are more ruins by far than any place since Eterpigny; and it is dirtier than any other village in the

region. The houses are almost ugly, rough red brick, with only one or two changes of painted concrete in the place. The church is rebuilt, without beauty, and is on a side slope of greasy mud. The water hole is very large and the village ducks had plenty of room. The big château has vanished. It remained—rather the ruins were there—until this summer; then they were considered too dangerous, and all was levelled to the ground. Only the battered long wall remains, and the ruins of the stables. The smaller "White Château" is not rebuilt. Its entrance gate is a picturesque ruin. Ruins, cellars, archways, skeleton roofs, more cellars, a few dugouts, more ruins; even the small cemetery is hedged by ruins, and you cannot get near the Wood without going past dozens of ruins.

The Canadian Memorial has the usual lettered stone, but the site is worthy of a splendid erection. Up on the top you can see all over the surrounding country, and the steps lead up inside the two rows of magnificent old tree trunks that were once the pride of the Château. In the old days a straight way led to them from the Château entrance, and guests went there to have a look around the countryside. Now these old trees have had all their wounds filled with cement, and are likely to last many more years, making the grounds really beautiful. The Château owners owned two-thirds of Bourlon, and the most of their government award for rebuilding has been transferred to Paris and to Fontaine Notre Dame, as it is the privilege of an owner to rebuild where he may choose. This left Bourlon an unsightly mass of ruins, and is the reason of so many wooden huts in use as homes.

Bourlon Wood itself is prohibited to the ordinary tourist, and if he were allowed in he would need heavy insurance. It has never been graded or touched, other than to be searched for bodies and for metal. It is all old shell craters and holes and gullies and wreckage that is rotten and slippery—a terrible place. Were the undergrowth removed it would make a picture to offer tourists after they had seen the village ruins.

Bourlon has a history. In 1815 the allies occupied France for long months.

The Duke of Wellington established himself at Cambrai, and he had a large camp at Bourlon "at a spot called 'Fontaine,' on account of water supply and wood." One hundred years later the Germans were shelling the British, and the British were fighting for France.

The people of Bourlon have had a large experience with soldiery. The old folk had the Russians, the Austrians and the Prussians, and voted the British the best, even in Wellington's day. An old entry reads quaintly that "as the English had money they had to pay eight sous per litre for milk, whereas two sous was the regular price." It does not require much racking of the memory to recall instances that make one sure that Bourlon people moved to other parts of France. The officers, it states, were all gentlemen and sports, well mounted, and hunted foxes. There were no hares or rabbits, so they caught partridge, placed them in pens and released them, shooting as they flew. The account dryly concludes: "Many of the partridge escaped."

In the Café de la Place we were entertained by a Scotsman who told us that the Cambrai attack of 1917 was a failure,

as a curse was put on the place years ago by a titled French lady, and that no English troops could ever have succeeded. When the Canadians came, the curse, of course, did not apply. He seemed a very moody man, a dour Scot, and told us he had not left France more than a month since the war ended. He does not want to live elsewhere, as it is his wish to be buried in a cemetery with men of his own division. To look at his grizzled head and granite jaw, is to be convinced that the old Scot is perfectly willing to die at any time, provided the burial arrangements can be made beforehand. Madame sighed with relief when he was gone, and said that were it not for the profit she makes by his patronage she would put something in his beer that would make him stay away. She says she has to cross herself and count her beads after each visit he makes, as he speaks so wrongly of dying. Just outside we saw a fat Frenchman with a walrus moustache catch our dour friend and bestow a New Year's kiss on either cheek. Jock used his handkerchief and gave a half-hearted peck in return; then they returned to have a round of drinks, and we escaped.



Traffic on the canal at Cambrai has resumed pre-war proportions.

CHAPTER XVIII

DOUAI AND DENAIN

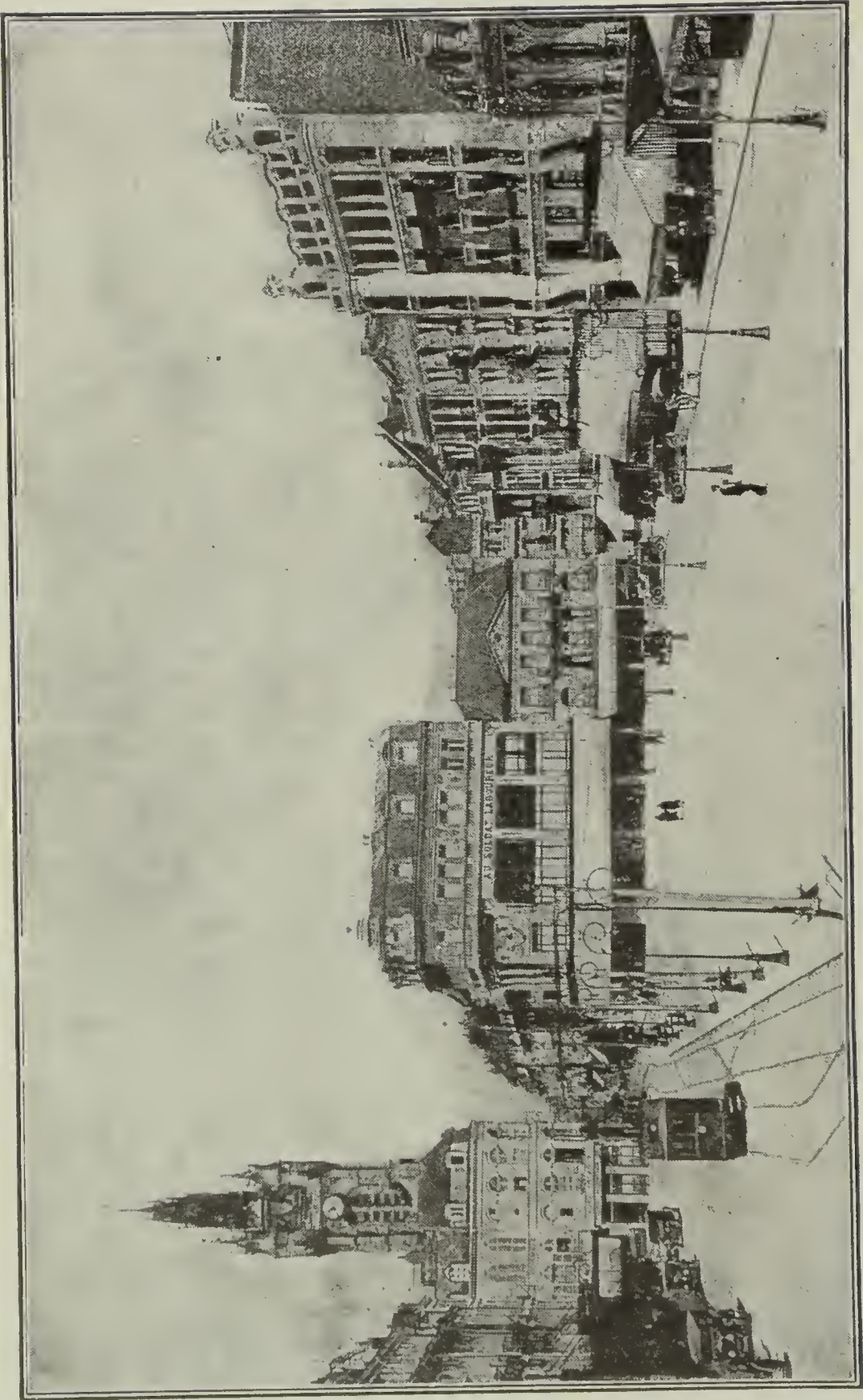
WE LEFT Arras by the Route Nationale leading through Gavrelle and Brebières, and stopped at the latter village. The local estaminet is very clean, and there you find veterans who fought in the war, and those who lived under German rule and can tell you many stories of what happened during those long years. One chap told me of seeing an explosion in German horse lines one night in '17. One of our airmen dropped the bomb, and killed eighteen horses and six transport men.

In Brebières I saw a signboard that seemed to hint of war days. One side proclaimed the fact that beer was for sale within, but if you take the board down and look at the other side you will see German lettering, an inscription regarding bomb stores. We stopped to chat with a farmer at the end of the village, a palefaced fellow who had been seized by the Germans and made to work for them. He told about digging trenches and handling stores, of all kinds of work even to assisting in planting anti-tank mines in the Canal du Nord region. In the records of the Canadian Engineers there is mention of 245 of these mines being discovered and destroyed. Only one of our tanks fell victim to such a device.

Men of the 8th Imperial Division claim that they were the first to enter Douai, but Canadians are certain that their 1st Brigade holds the honors. The road in is without beauty. Homes straggle along as if there had been a half-hearted attempt at establishing a village, and there are many barns, considerable corrugated iron and many dogs and bedraggled fowl by the way. But you forget all this once you are in the city, for Douai itself is most quaint and interesting.

I REMEMBER passing through on my way to "Blighty" in November '18. There had been many stories of the areas the Germans occupied throughout the war, and I had come by way of Valenciennes and Denain, so went on to Douai. People were swarming back to the city. The Germans had forced them to evacuate, and now they were returning and were in desperate circumstances. Their homes had not been destroyed but looted. All they had treasured had been taken. Furniture had been removed, the houses stripped. Pictures and mirrors had been smashed, clocks thrown to the floor, china shattered, doors kicked off their hinges.

The Engineers had found the place full of booby traps, explosives ready to be detonated by the opening of a door, the taking of a German helmet, the working of a pump handle. Yet, in spite of all preparation, there were very, very few injured by the traps; in nearly every instance they were detected. The shops had all been looted. The doors stood open and goods were strewn about the floor, even in the street. I saw an armload of fine laces lying in a mudhole, men's shirts and collars being trampled underfoot. At a drug store some vandal had deliberately smashed a shelf-load of bottles containing all kinds of mixtures, and the reek was horrible. Several of the merchants had returned and were trying to restore order. They talked most bitterly of their enemies, and declared that during all the occupation they had treated the invader most courteously. One entire block of buildings on the Rue de Paris had been burned, but the Hôtel de Ville was spared. A soldier was on guard there. The Germans had taken nearly everything that was movable, then had to abandon a pile of loot that stood ready near the



The Grande Place at Douai has been fully restored.

door. It was the same in the cathedral. Loot was heaped in readiness.

The systematic looting was carried on in all the villages in the Douai and Denain area. Every house and shop was stripped. Yet these people had all treated the Germans very fairly, had given them all they asked for.

Across the Grande Place were stretched many banners, and the same kind were in all the towns. *Vive les Canadiens*. "Long Live Our Liberators." "Glory to the Heroes." One old chap had a square of cardboard placed in a window that was broken, and on it had printed in scrawling letters: *Bon Canada*. Perhaps a soldier had done it for him. Our men were assisting all, helping every one in the city. I had no rations that day and there was no place at which one could buy a meal, so I used the regular soldier's method — went bumming at a cook kitchen. It belonged to some Imperial outfit, and the cooks were generous, but I didn't get anything there. I never asked. Seated around the cooks, on old boxes, boards, bricks, anything, were at least fifteen children, and every one had a bowl of mulligan. In the background were a dozen soldiers, men who had given their dinners that those kiddies might be fed.

DOUAI is quaint and old, and picturesque. There are very few traces of war. Here and there a shell-shattered wall reminds you of thirteen years ago, but that is all. I saw only two heaps of German concrete. A German cemetery was in the town, and a fine memorial was erected, but the citizens had everything removed. The cemetery was moved to *Maison Blanche*, near Arras, and the Memorial went with it.

It is a "different" city. Its homes and public buildings seem to have an architecture all their own.

The roofs are littered with chimneys and ten-inch brick ridges run from the eaves to each chimney, as if they are dividing lines. Lampposts are set two feet inside the curb, in places almost in the middle of the sidewalk, yet there is no trouble with traffic. The people are very polite. They bow and smile, and say "After you, monsieur." In the street the same rules reign. Huge carts lum-

ber along, cars dart here and there, and street cars rumble, yet each one seems willing to let the other go first.

The bell tower dominates the city, can be seen from any point, with its four towers on the corners. The street cars move leisurely. They are covered with brilliant advertising and quite comfortable. The streets are narrow and twist and turn at all angles, while lanes and footways lead into back areas. Immense high shutters cover all the lower windows at night and must have been a boon to the people during the occupation.

The Palais de Justice is a huge wide, low building of plain appearance, situated where five streets lead in at such angles that one cannot see down any of them for more than fifty yards. The Hôtel du Dauphin is a quaint old place with many decorations on the front, and many of the old shops and estaminets are very picturesque. The Porte de Valenciennes is quite imposing. Its three arched ways, flanked by two towers, seem the entrance to some mighty castle. In the big estaminet close by, I met two old men who had been in Douai during the occupation, and they told me many stories of hardships. No doubt some of them were colored by their bitterness, but one had every reason to believe that much of what they tell is true.

The Grande Place is very clean and well kept. There is a modern Arcade, a hotel, and five very fine new buildings erected in the area that was burned. A square of lampposts enclose the centre of the Place, and it is used by pedestrians only. There are fine shade trees, nice walks and gardens where the River Scarpe corners into the city, splendid vistas that have enthralled many tourists. In the "Park" one finds hedges and lawns and flowers, and wonderful shrubbery, pools, caverns, grassy glades, enchanting footways. In summer it is one huge playground for the children.

LEWARDE is the next village, and it is a small one. But many German troops billeted there during the war, and in the local estaminet you can hear them tell how at the last they took every horse and pig and fowl, even the goats,



Rue de la Marie, Douai. The clock tower on clear days was visible from the Canadian lines on Vimy Ridge.

took all the farm implements, all the vegetables. The straw from the threshing was all burned, and what grain could not be carried away was thrown into the latrines and ditches. Lewarde will be a long time forgetting the war.

In '18 when I was there, a certain barn was a sightseeing place for all troops that passed by. It had been used as a concert hall by the Germans, and on the walls were three pictures expressing the German mind. A motto read: "As Ye sow so shall We reap." The first picture represented an ox drawing a huge wooden plow. A young woman, once beautiful but now broken by labor, was guiding the implement and finding it hard work. The second picture was of an old gnarled peasant sowing a field. Beside him was a little boy. Behind was the village church and a windmill. Both illustrations depicted the despair of the workers; they were laboring for their conquerors. The third picture portrayed a giant Prussian soldier, as repulsive as an animal. Power and strength and cunning had been depicted and, unconsciously, the artist had given a true impression. His soldier had no soul. "Brute" was written into every line.

The Germans looted Lewarde of every stick of furniture and the 1st Brigade captured a trainload of it, packed and labelled. The placards read: "By Order of the Army Command."

Auberchicourt is the next village and almost joins Lewarde. There are many bright red-brick cottages, whitewashed walls, new concrete fronts, pretty gardens. It is a very wide-awake little town, with mines and glassworks providing employment for many. In an estaminet I talked with a woman who said she was a girl when the Germans were billeted there, and that she saw one of our soldiers brought back as a prisoner. He had lost his way, she said, and had walked into the German lines. They kept him at her home for several hours awaiting the arrival of some officer, and during the time he conversed with her folk, as he could speak French quite fluently. She said he did not seem afraid of the Germans at all, but answered them defiantly on every subject.

At another house an old man told me about the trick some German soldiers played on one of their officers. He was very frightened of a huge dog that was kept at the back of the house, chained to his kennel. The officer often came home late, and sometimes tipsy, so one dark night they got a length of rope and added it to the chain. When the dog rushed at the officer it seemed as if he were loose, and the German ran, firing his revolver. All would have been well had not the big animal surged with such strength that the rope broke, and only the timely arrival of a brother major saved the runner from disaster had the dog attacked him.

The Germans wrecked the mines at Auberchicourt before leaving, and took everything valuable. They deported all the young men and women, taking them to work on their farms or in the forests, and therepaying them worthless paper money. Food was so scarce in the town that the American Red Cross was sending parcels to the people, which the Germans delivered and then confiscated, giving their own black bread and turnip soup in exchange. Many of the French died during that last year, their strength sapped by lack of nourishment, and all through that area the youth of today look wizened and undersized, and are almost useless as workers. Starved for years, merely kept alive, they are a living memorial of the war.

Our 11th Brigade captured Auberchicourt on October 18, and on the next day Escaudin was taken by the 54th Battalion, while the 1st Division captured Somain, Hornaing, and Helesmes. The 4th Division captured Rouvignies, and on October 20, Wallers and Haveluy were taken.

FROM Auberchicourt we kept to the left on a smaller road, turned left again and were in Somain. It is a small town, with old and new buildings intermingled, with a swarm of fowl about the streets and dogs in every yard. The people are very friendly, and told me that when Vimy was captured they were so jubilant that ten of their men were fined by the Germans. Some of the German officers had cameras and were friendly with some of the people. I was



At Remy—"wall ruins rise in long points."



War ruins at Bourlon remind the visitor of the grim days of 1918.

shown several snapshots of shell holes outside of Douai, of ruins in the city, of massed troops in the Grande Place, and of field manoeuvres at Somain. There is no distinctive building at Somain, no outstanding landmark, but the warm reception one receives makes him glad he stopped.

You next go right and reach Honnaing, another small village with several large barns, bright, cheerful estaminets, and talkative people. They are eager to tell of the days when the Germans ruled them, and of how they often outwitted them in the matter of foodstuffs and drink. One old chap proudly told me that he had wine for two years after the Germans came, having hidden a store of it in a second cellar that the invaders never found. Another told of burying all the valuables of three homes in a certain garden plot. They had a fright when the Germans decided to plant cabbage in it, but overcame all difficulty by offering to do the work themselves, provided they got shares of the vegetables. This was readily agreed to, and the workers never probed very deep.

Haveluy, Wallers and Helesmes are reached by another side road, and there is little of interest in the villages. That is, there is little to be seen. Each has similar brick buildings, houses and barns, and shops and estaminets, the church and school and Mairie, the town memorial. Here and there are fronts of new concrete, and an occasional gasoline station or new sign lends a modern touch entirely out of keeping with the rest of the village.

But there are many things of interest inside the homes. They can show you many German souvenirs as well as British ones. When our soldiers overran that territory the German was in flight, the war was won. Our men were in high spirits, and the French fugitives had all their sympathy. They gave them food and blankets and boots and shirts and socks, and in the homes where they were billeted you will find badges and photographs and pocket knives, all kinds of smaller trinkets even to British coins.

In one home I saw a pair of army issue boots that had been re-soled many times before being put away. I saw two army

spades, a British bayonet and a water-bottle. Several own German water-bottles and helmets, and if a tourist is in search of souvenirs he could do no better than explore that stretch of country leading back from Douai.

Escaudain is like the rest of the villages, even to the Byrrh signs and butcher shops. A rug merchant was resting in one of the houses and I was amazed to learn that he had been with the German troops as an interpreter. Evidently he had been careful to remain on friendly terms with the French people, for he was well received at each home. I then made enquiries about German tourists and found that many are coming now to the Douai and Denain area, but these of course, are not the ones who were there during the war.

DENAIN had many visitors. The mines in the Denain area provide work for many, and the town itself is very interesting. Market day there draws an immense crowd. When last I saw Denain it was in a deplorable state. German engineers had destroyed the mines with dynamite, and the entrances were strewn with wreckage. Mines were blown in the streets and one immense crater blocked traffic. It was just across the railway on one of the principal streets. Our pioneers were filling in the craters and clearing debris while French police watched over everything. The people apparently had not left the city when the Germans fled, and a 4th Division man told me of the grand reception that took place at the Church when the Prince of Wales, Sir Arthur Currie, and others were received by the curé. It had been a day of bands playing and flags fluttering, of cheering and march pasts, and saluting, and all the inhabitants were wild with delight. He told of old dames kissing young officers, of girls throwing garlands of flowers over the tin hats of the marching men, of enthusiastic embraces in the Grande Place. Altogether it was a day to be remembered.

I stayed overnight at the city and the next morning saw a transport man in hysterics. He had had a very thirsty mule in tow, and was searching for water. Being thirsty himself he went

into an estaminet to make enquiries, and while he was there a trio of Tommies came into view. They had found a cellarful of liquid refreshments and were in merry mood. Among the stock was an amount of German soda water. They despised such "fizz" and decided to give it to the mule. The mule was certainly thirsty, and he imbibed many quarts of the tonic before deciding he had had enough. I stayed by to watch results and was rewarded for my waiting. Shortly the mule began to resemble a grotesque balloon, and those who had stood him the drinks began to fear an explosion. While they were arguing about who was to blame, the mule's caretaker appeared. He stopped, aghast. Then he walked around the animal at a safe distance. He made several circles, going closer each time, and at last timidly felt the mule's sides. The mule appeared to get bigger, and began to rock as if his footing were not secure. The man took another look at his steed, then beat it. At noon, when I left, friend mule was still tethered to the post, and half the population of Denain had inspected him, and wondered.

Denain has wider streets than Douai, and the people are a trifle more reserved. At the movie theatre, however, all classes mingle with the ease and gaiety of one large family group. All smoke, and smile at the many notices on the walls prohibiting such a practice. Girls go around during the intermission and sell candy that is unlike anything else on earth. The men wear their caps if they choose, and every one is happy.

At the shops I found a great variety of merchandise, and prices cheap, much cheaper than in Arras or Douai. I made enquiries about it and was told that the nearness of Valenciennes had caused such a circumstance. There are the usual war souvenirs in the shape of pins and cigarette holders, and jack-knives, and they told me that many tourists go to Denain. There were so many stories about what happened in the city in '14 that during the first few years after the war no fewer than seven investigations were conducted.

On Sunday Denain dresses in its finery and the streets are like parades. Couples and trios and quartettes march

slowly along, gazing in the shop windows. All shop blinds are raised at nine o'clock on Sunday morning, and the best goods are displayed. By noon half the shops are doing business.

ROUVIGNIES is a nice village, with several fine gardens. 4th Division men had a gay time with the girls after they had sent Otto and Fritz headlong for Berlin. The people had more flags per house than any other small town—so 4th Division veterans informed me.

One of the old French farmers told me how he had got rid of a number of German officers. They had come and settled in his house, and one had shot both his cats and his dog. This had infuriated the old fellow, as the cats were all the protection he had against rats. Soon the rodents were under his house, and so he starved himself of cheese in order to place bits in the partitions of the officers' rooms. Then he pried openings in the corners, and watched his chance to put more bits around the officers' belongings. Soon the rats were having a merry time with the followers of Von Kluck, so much so that after two weeks of midnight battles they gave up—and moved to other quarters.

All along the road leading into Valenciennes are market gardens and chicken farms, and the district seems prosperous. I stopped to talk with one old man who was feeding the usual flock of white hens, and he told me that the city of lace was one of the best markets in all France.

Wavrechain was the last village I visited on my way to the city, and the only interesting feature I saw there was a gypsy caravan, with the turbanned lady who told fortunes busily engaged in frying hot dogs and selling them for two francs each. After inspecting her outfit I felt sure that one could purchase from her hot dogs of almost any flavor desired.

It is a "different" part of France—that stretch which for so long was called German territory. There is not the same atmosphere as in the villages on the Mont St. Eloi side of the Vimy line. The people show more of the effects of the strain of war, and they can describe the German to you with a simple directness

that is unusual. They can tell you what to expect from a Brandenburger, a Saxon or a Prussian, how the officers treat their men, and what sort of spenders the soldiers are. In most of the towns they take delight in telling you that none of their girls were won over by the invaders, and it is easy to believe. The younger generation now dancing to radio music from Berlin and eating British chocolate will keep an outsider at arm's length in a manner that would be astounding to the Canadian veteran.

But it is a part that the traveller will like. Douai is a quaint town and so are all the villages along the way. Denain is dignified. At least one gathers that impression on Sundays, and yet all the folk are hospitable. You miss all the new brick of the war areas, and yet meet more war-worn veterans here than elsewhere; and with it all rides a charming thrill of discovery. You never know what German relic you may chance to find, what story you may unexpectedly hear.



A bird's-eye view of Mons as it is today.



Canadian troops in the Grande Place at Mons, November 11, 1918.

CHAPTER XIX

JOURNEY'S END

THE route to Mons is a pretty drive but reveals few traces of the war. The old places are very quaint and the villages are clean, while in each one you can hear stories more vivid than any fiction. A few ruins are by the way as you leave Cambrai, before you reach the big château. Then, after passing the memorial, there are a few more shell-marked walls and cellars and a château in the wood on the left. The road goes between tall trees, and here and there are picturesque homes with old white walls and hedges along the fields, everything speaking of days of peace instead of war.

Iwvy has some ruins and its memorial, and some walls bear shrapnel scars that cannot be obliterated, but on the whole it would be a pretty village were it not for the large factory near more ruins. Beyond that there are rows of houses in blocks, as if a child had arranged them. At one old home that had a faded Débitant sign I halted to chat with the old lady, who was as round as an apple and as red-cheeked as one. She told me that during all the long years of the war she and her old husband planted their garden over a cache that contained all their treasures, including chinaware and even her husband's Sunday shoes, which surely would be in poor condition when they were resurrected. "Ah, yes," said madame, "but even so it was better than letting the Germans have them." Then she told me that there were many others in the village who had buried all their most precious belongings, and that not one hiding place was discovered. It made me think of the story I heard at Mametz. They say there, and stoutly adhere to the story, that the mayor of Mametz buried all his wine in his garden and that in spite of all the shelling and

trench digging he found it as he had left it, with not a bottle damaged.

Douchy, the next village, has many advertisements, and old, low-roofed houses close together, and a big château. Going over the railroad, you see a large mound on the left that looks as if it had a war history. Then you reach Lescant.

Three calls we made there, and were finally rewarded. One old dame showed me a small, black-backed diary that she has kept since '14. On the front page is a name, Lce.-Cpl. Henry Tull, but no number or reference to his unit. There are but three entries in it. They read:

"We'll call this Monday, but I'm not sure. Jim was killed last night, shot in the back near some bushes. We buried him. That's six from the section."

"Tuesday. The sergeant died at noon. He was hit in both legs. We haven't had much sleep."

"Wednesday. It is tough enough. Half the company is gone. There must be over a hundred dead Germans in front of our hedge. They were killed yesterday morning. We've had no orders all day. Pinkey may go."

There is a long black scrawl from the last word as if the indelible pencil had been too wet. The old lady was given the little book by a German who was billeted at her home. She treasures it, and probably has shown it to many British visitors.

Across the canal there is a wood on the left, more old houses, and some huge slag heaps appear. Now you can see black and white cattle in the pastures, and horses, and there are flocks of geese and ducks. It is a prosperous farm country, with many coal mines along the way. There are some nice orchards, and then we reach tram lines and are in La Sentinelle, with much new concrete in

evidence before we go over the canal and into Valenciennes, scene of one of the 4th Division's victories.

REMEMBER the old smashed station there, and all the ruins near it, and barricades and barbed wire? It's all so different that you hardly realize where you are. The station is a grand building now, and the old front that faced the square has been rebuilt in modern fashion. There are many fine stores with great plate glass fronts, and a maze of electric signs. The hotels are flashy and there are many cinemas and fine restaurants. Life is very gay in the city and the streets seem crowded with soldiers. The barracks look as they did in '18. Up by the doctor's office on the street leading out of the city toward Mons the houses have been rebuilt exactly as they were, and others repaired, so that there does not seem to be much change. All those who followed the 4th Division through the city will remember the skeleton wired there, with an old musket beside it, and the legend above, "Out Since Mons."

Many of the old most damaged streets seem to have been transformed into boulevards, but in the back areas all are the same. All the corner by the canal crossing has been rebuilt, and there is a large shop where the crude "comfort station" used to be.

One strange custom of France bothers many tourists. At noon all places close. Every store and bank and office locks its doors, and the town or city has its noonday meal. A roll and a cup of coffee suffice for a French breakfast and nothing in the world is going to keep the Frenchman from the table at midday. So all business is put by until the inner man is satisfied.

Valenciennes seemed, like the rest, a deserted place at noon. And there, too, they have the same parking regulations as in Arras and Albert and Amiens. On one day the cars all park on the left side of the streets; the next day they park on the right. This system gives the merchants an even break, and there is no confusion.

In more than one place in the city you can see old German signs. One is very near the barracks, and reads Understan-

It points to one of the old shelters used during air raids, and such signs were very common as we got through into his territory in late '18. After passing a few old Nissen huts you are out on the main highway and seeing many pretty horn-beam hedges, with new and old buildings intermingled and considerable construction in progress. Tall trees line the way again, and under them the old whitewashed walls seem more picturesque.

Onnaing looks very old, with many long white walls. It is a village of walls, and three-fourths of them are painted white. There are a few army huts still in use, and the church and post office seem the principal buildings.

I heard a strange story in an estaminet there. During the war a carrier pigeon was brought into an old lady's house by her pet cat. The bird had been dead for some time, and had not been killed by the cat. A German saw the cat go in with her booty and in five minutes the poor old woman was arrested as a spy. There was no message on the pigeon, and later it was proved to be a bird that had been loosed by mistake, yet the Frenchwoman received weeks of persecution and was closely watched during the rest of the German occupation.

Quarouble has much new concrete to contrast with its white walls, and there we were halted by a guard on the road who waved a red flag. We thought of Russia or road construction, but there was no hint of either, and as we slowed the official waved us on in a most violent manner. We passed many factories and slag heaps, and black smoke wreathed the sky. There was much more traffic and many signs of increased activity. We knew we must be near the frontier.

AT THE first barrier we were let by quite easily, though we could see that those entering France were being closely examined. Bicycles, carts, cars and trams were in a jam, and there was much gesticulating and shouting. Bread seemed cheaper on the Belgian side, as all coming over were carrying from one to three loaves. A truck with a load of chicory was halted in our path and the driver ordered to unload every basket for inspection. This seemed an impos-

sible barrier, but as soon as it was known that a Canadian wanted to pass we were given the right of way. "Canada" seems to have the same magic it had in many places in wartime.

Quievrain is a very quaint old town. We were told many queer stories of German doings in each place that we called. One old dame with a respectable chin whisker told me that the Germans were harsh with those who in any way opposed them, but were lenient with those who were willing to obey all orders. She then told me in whispers that she had a French spy in her house for seven days. He was dressed as a farm laborer, and more than once ate in the kitchen when Germans were seated there. She had been in dread that he would be discovered, but he seemed quite successful in avoiding all suspicion. It seemed a town of lumbering carts, gigantic three-wheeled affairs, with drivers seated on one of the horses.

At the second barrier we were stopped by a Belgian with a dismal set of features. After much muttering to himself and probing all our belongings with his dirty fingers, he ordered us on, and looked disgusted as if we had cheated him. The streets twist and turn in every way until you see the spire of Thulin on the left. It looks a very pretty town in the distance, but the villages are now so close together that you seem in one continuous street, and you're in Boussu before you know it.

It is quaint and clean. On every street we saw a woman scrubbing a walk or washing windows that already looked spotless. Every doorknob and latch glistened, and there were white curtains in every window. There are many advertisements of shops in Mons all along the way, and a great many road signs. No one need get lost in Belgium.

Hornu has too many slag heaps to have any claim on beauty and there is too much building going on. Wasmuel continues the story, with flashes of new concrete among the white walls, and flaring advertisements on every shop end. It continues a long street, and there is scarcely room for a shepherd to take his flock across the road.

Quaregnon is old and quaint and clean. Cars of coal that lumber by at the railway crossing are all whitewashed, and a man told me that they do this so that no coal can be removed in transit without leaving proof of its being taken.

At last we were in Jemappes. Many ruins were there when last I saw it, but not one remains. It seems a much larger town than in '18, with many new homes. I found the house where a bunch of us got a feed on the Saturday night when we marched in, tired, footsore and hungry, and found that no rations had arrived. The old man still lives there and seemed to become reinvigorated in every joint when I told him of that night we had visited him. Then, after much searching, I found the yard in which we were sitting next morning, in beautiful sunshine with the church bells ringing and two little girls playing with us, when the order came for us to put on "battle order" and fall in for an attack on Mons. Attack on Mons! Thirteen years after I can still experience the feelings of those first moments after we received the order. To live forty-eight hours longer meant that we would survive the war, and yet . . . We went, crossing a deep water-filled trench by using a stretcher as a bridge, plodding on, every man silent and seething with emotion.

From Jemappes I traced every yard over which we advanced that Sunday afternoon. The Princess Pats had fought their way in close to the town, and I remember seeing the Segard brewery inches deep in beer through leakage from vats that shrapnel had damaged. The little outbuilding where Jones and Mills were killed is still there, but the old lady who, in that shell fire, watched us from her back door, has gone.

MONS is a fine town. It's a good place to spend an evening, with plenty of music and dancing and gay cafés, and yet there are few places that rate such a high average of education. The people of Mons pride themselves on their education, and have at least seven colleges. Many of the shops have been enlarged and have had new fronts installed.

At the Grande Place there is a café run by an English veteran, and many of the people speak English. The Hôtel de



*Above: Mons:
The Grande
Place and the
Hotel de Ville.
Right: The
ruined railway
station at Jem-
appes as the
Germans left
it.*

Ville looks as it did, but now you go under the old covered way to visit a fine war museum in the rear. The ponderous lock at the front and the monkey on guard are just the same, and inside the entrance there are three tablets. One is in honor of the men and officers of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers. A second states:

"Mons was recaptured by the Canadian Corps on the 11th of November, 1918. After fifty months of German occupation freedom was restored to the city. Here was fired the last shot of the Great War."

The third tablet is a huge thing with an inscription about the army of the United States. It is an amazing thing to find an American memorial there, and explains to some extent why some Americans tell in hotels in Brussels that their troops captured Mons.

I saw the house where Sonny Dick had the girl who was covered with warts, and the place where Kennedy hung a crude "smallpox" sign on the front door as soon as he discovered that the mademoiselle who lived there had a warm heart for Canadian soldiers.

DURING that last night of war, as we began to work our way into Mons through gardens and alleys, old "Muddy" Gallagher was one of those in advance patrol preceeding through a cabbage patch. Nearer the houses we had plenty to take our attention, but after the machine gun posts were cleared we tried to get in touch with our flanking parties. Gallagher and Kennedy had vanished. Had they been captured? Filled with apprehension, Sambro Brown and I worked over near a wall and saw light from a cellar window. We crawled closer, and heard a humming as from a huge beehive. Getting bolder, we rose and rapped at the door. It was opened at once, and there, seated among at least ten ladies, was Gallagher. He had the prettiest girl of the lot on his knees, but another had her arms around his neck. They surrounded him completely, had disarmed him and taken his equipment and tin hat and gas mask, and were admiring his bony and hairy legs.

All these and many other memories came back as I explored the town. It

took me all afternoon to locate the home of the old couple who had taken me in that armistice morning, and where I had slept, or tried to sleep, until a young German crept out of the closet of my room. He had hidden there as we rushed the town and was scared as badly as a man could be—a chap of not more than eighteen years. The old folks were dead, and strangers in the house knew nothing of Mons in war days.

Down at the restaurant of the "Three Cats," not very far from the "Red Hand," which all soldiers knew, I got splendid meals and heard many yarns of things that happened in late '18. Afterward, outside, I was approached by a man who had sat in the corner, a light-haired, quiet fellow, who calmly informed me that he was a German and that he had been in Raismes Forest as we fought our way through it. He was a find. He talked good English and was very well read. Till midnight we sat and talked, and my dominant impression was that he was one more German veteran who was quite satisfied with the results of the war.

There is little more to tell. When going back, I looked in at Le Cateau, a pretty little village among the hills. There they have many stories to tell you of British soldiers who escaped to the big wood near by, the Forêt de Mormal, and there avoided capture for many weary weeks. One widow, Madame Belmont-Gobert, of Bertry, hid one fugitive in a cupboard in her home and kept him there from '14 to the finish of the war, with Germans billeted in her house most of the time. To my way of thinking, the man must have suffered more than if he had been taken prisoner. I saw his photo and he was an aged man when the war ended, a ghost of his former self. In the British war museum you may see the cupboard, and it tells you the story better than words. It is not high enough for a man to stand upright, and one-half the meagre space was shelved. Yet he lived there and kept his reason, and to-day madame wears a British decoration for her part in the Great War. On the wall of the Hôtel de Ville you may read the names of the citizens of Le Cateau who were shot by the Germans, and

among the list I noticed that one lot of seven had been shot for keeping pigeons.

In the estaminet there I met an English journalist who was looking for old war ground, and he informed me that he could not find a trench or dugout save at Vimy and Beaumont Hamel. There are many others who say the same thing as they whizz by in motor cars, and anyone who travels as they do over the straight roads will surely not see much. But I thought of him as I left Arras by train and, looking out the car window before reaching the outskirts of Lens, saw in a bank seven yawning dugout entrances with an old post beside one that one day held a gas alarm; and I remembered him as we went on past the chalky cuts at Hill 70 and for fifty yards ran by a trench that is still much as it was in '18, with every bay and traverse in good condition. You can see many things if you take the trouble to go off the beaten track and search.

It is a long way from Ypres to Mons, and when the trip is done your memories and thoughts are so commingled that you hardly know the war is history. You see again the long shadowy files on the duckboards of the Salient, a silhouette of steel helmets and rifle muzzles. You see long strings of mules taking up ammunition, see the flicker of Verey lights as you leave Mont St. Eloi for the trenches at the crater line. You see, in fancy, the lorries and traffic of the back areas, sausage balloons, battery positions, trenches at stand-to, the gutted, wired, rat-ridden spaces between the lines, seeing most, of course, that which most impressed you, seared deepest in your brain, whether it were the sleet and shrapnel of Vimy, the blood bath of the Somme, or the terrible diarrhoea of war that we knew as Passchendaele. And now you see only greens and browns, and vivid new cement and brick farms that glare their newness. The peasant is back on his ground again and war has gone, but the stark stiff newness of everything drives you back, sends you afar into the old billeting areas from Gouy Servins to St. Hilaire.

And you hear things. Muffled, crump-ing explosions, where French or Flemish are destroying pillboxes, bring back the echo of other days, and in the ensuing stillness you taste again the sensations of the armistice period, when every old sweat went around as if he were listening, unable, all at once, to comprehend the enormous quiet. Gunners after rabbits in some small wood will sometimes thrill you with a quick succession of shots, and the drone of airplanes overhead brings back the old anxiety as to whether it is one of "ours" or "theirs."

But you can get the real earfuls in the estaminets and cafés. Here and there are British veterans, many Cockneys, a few Canadians, and they have developed their imaginations so that they can entertain all tourists. They are not alone in their art. You can meet old French farmers who blink at you across the table as they drain their mugs and tell you tales that would daunt a circus showman. I'll give you four examples before I ring off, four only of a thousand I've heard belonging to the same category.

AT ALBERT I met a small man with a giant's moustache and the thirst of an empty camel. He told of a dugout he had up at Ypres where the rats were so big and fat that they resembled poodle dogs. He trained one to do many tricks, making it so tame that he got a small dog collar for it. It used to cross over No Man's Land, and one night came back with a message tied to the collar. After that he corresponded regularly with a pleasant Otto over the way who could write fair English, and swapped badges with him and smoking tobacco. The rat always had jam after making one of the trips. Finally a relief on the enemy side sent Otto away and brought in an outfit of Bavarians who were most slurring and insulting in their initial message. So our rat tamer had a brain wave. He taught his pet one thing only for seven straight days, then sent him over the way with two Mills bombs across his back, tied together. The rat slid them off in the German trench, nipped out the pins and beat it — and the unfriendly ones were blown to the Fatherland.

At Amiens I had a taxi driver who had a fearful scar on his neck. I asked him

if it were a war injury, and he said it was. He had got it while bathing in the canal near La Basse, the result of more German war guilt. Each day he and his chums had a bath in the cooling water, and this time he was attacked by a most ferocious fish which almost severed his head from his body. He said it was commonly known in that sector that the Germans imported the fish from East Africa, and that they were fiercer than sharks. The British, he said, put explosives into the water, and forty-nine of the monsters floated to the surface. They measured seven feet in length and had a swordlike nose, and their hides made excellent leggings. The British had arrangements under way to bring over a shipment of cobras from India, but the snakes could not survive such a long journey. They were to be led over to the German lines by the Indians and let loose.

A Frenchman near Inchy en Artois told me of the trouble he had, and the terrible fate of his neighbor, in '15. Soldiers came to his well for water in such numbers that they wrecked the windlass, and there was difficulty in getting the pail hoisted. An Indian battery was billeted near by and they wanted more water. One afternoon the neighbor came over with a splendid wooden wheel, of strange pattern but just the thing to wind up rope. It was soon fixed on the well curb and in active service. Next morning the neighbor's head was staring at all from a picket fence. It had been neatly severed from his body and placed there as a grim warning. The windlass was missing from the well. My friend made discreet enquiries and was told that the salvaged rope winder was in reality a precious possession of the Indian batter — their soul-saving "prayer wheel."

Seated in a field in the open spaces beyond Arleux, I talked long with a shepherd who tended a large flock of sheep. He was wearing six overcoats at least, and several scarves, and his features resembled portraits of Tut-Ankh-Amen. He told me that during the war he was close to our lines when he saw the earth move in a mysterious way and soon discovered that the Germans had tunnelled under our trenches and intend-

ed to emerge back of our front and overrun the area. He had no chance to get away to give the alarm, and had been mowing. Taking a firm grip on his heavy scythe, he swung heavily as the first squarehead appeared. The head rolled to one side but the body kept on, so sudden was death, and my friend pushed it out of the way as it faltered. Eleven German soldiers met a like fate. They popped out at intervals, were decapitated, and the bodies piled alongside. Then a fat officer slid back after losing his top part, and so the performance ended. Help arrived in time to relieve the shepherd, and he was decorated with several crosses.

Such are the stories the entertaining ones will tell you, but there are others who can give you reliable information about old war areas and show you unusual spots of interest. To the careful observer will come many rewards, especially in the Somme and Vimy districts, and, one and all, veterans or otherwise, will surely pause a long time on Vimy Ridge at the trenches and tunnels.

The most striking feature perhaps to the thinking man is the width and extent of the battlegrounds. Up at Ypres you can walk in three hours to the deepest part of the Salient, can reach the full extent of all the furious struggles from '14 to '18. Attack and counterattack surged back and forth in that big Salient wheel on such a scale that it gave rise to many stories regarding the capture of certain points. One sketch in a wartime publication showed a disgruntled soldier leading his lorry with brick from a heap of ruins, and he is explaining his job to an enquirer. "We're movin' this lot over the ruddy hill," he is saying, "so that them staff gents can say we've made an advance. It's one of these 'ere Belgian villages."

Canadians visit the Salient, the Somme and Vimy Ridge, and British veterans always go first to Ypres. The French have Verdun as their main interest, but many go to Nôtre Dame Lorette and then across the valley to Vimy. All talk of the terrific fighting they did, then drift to condemnation of the present state of things and blame all the world for their troubles.

The German veterans gaze moodily down the Menin Road, thinking no doubt how near they were to victory, and yet so far. They stand and dream at Vimy Ridge, and spend hours on end at various spots along the Somme. The German seems a thinker of serious things. I've talked with many of them and found them very broadminded in their viewpoints, and I've seen big, grizzled veterans with Iron Cross ribbons under the lapel of their jackets stand at Zonnebeke and Passchendaele and look over the great sweep of black and white grave memorials until tears streamed down their checks and they could not speak at all. Then, in the hotels in the evening,

when they did talk, they bitterly denounced all things that had come to pass since '18. Such attitudes have given me a closing story.

A party of old crocks used as pioneers was sent to an isolated point during the last days of the war and had no rumors of proceedings until Armistice morning, when the young officer in charge received the all-important message. He at once fell in the party, adjusted his monocle and read the news in very grave and impressive tones. After he had finished there was a heavy silence, then an old Cockney sergeant stepped forward and saluted. "Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but 'oo's won?"

(The End)



Nowadays the Mons monkey welcomes tourists instead of troops.

ADDENDUM

A V. C. Veteran Speaks

Your articles dealing with the part taken by the Canadian troops in the Great War are coming to be regarded more and more as authentic historical presentations by the rising generation, therefore there are some facts about the second battle of Ypres in the article entitled "Thirteen Years After," by Will Bird, who was not present in Belgium at that time, which may as well be dealt with at once by a survivor of that epic battle, so highly regarded by Marshal Foch.

On page twenty-seven, column two, January 1 issue, Mr. Bird says that a 12th Battalion veteran told him that 3rd Brigade headquarters were not at Shelltrap Farm, but were on the St. Julien Road. This is not correct, for I was defending the artillery position and Shelltrap Farm during the night of April 22 until 3 p.m. of the 23rd, along with the machine guns of the Buffs. The Germans were being held in the gap on our left front by Colonel Geddes of the Buffs, with five Imperial Battalions, and how! At 4 p.m. on the 23rd of April, I reported to Colonel Loomis of the 13th Battalion at St. Julien, where he was in command in a sandbag fort. He gave me dispatches for my C. O., and the approximate position of the 7th Battalion in front of Keerselaere, also the lay of the German positions as far as could be ascertained through his telescope.

At dusk, I got my machine guns up to the 7th Battalion in front of Keerselaere, after Colonel McHarg had been fatally wounded in a reckless daylight scouting sortie.—Edward D. Bellew, V.C., Captain, 83 Mile House, Cariboo, B.C.

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F8B5 Bird, William R.

Thirteen years after.

